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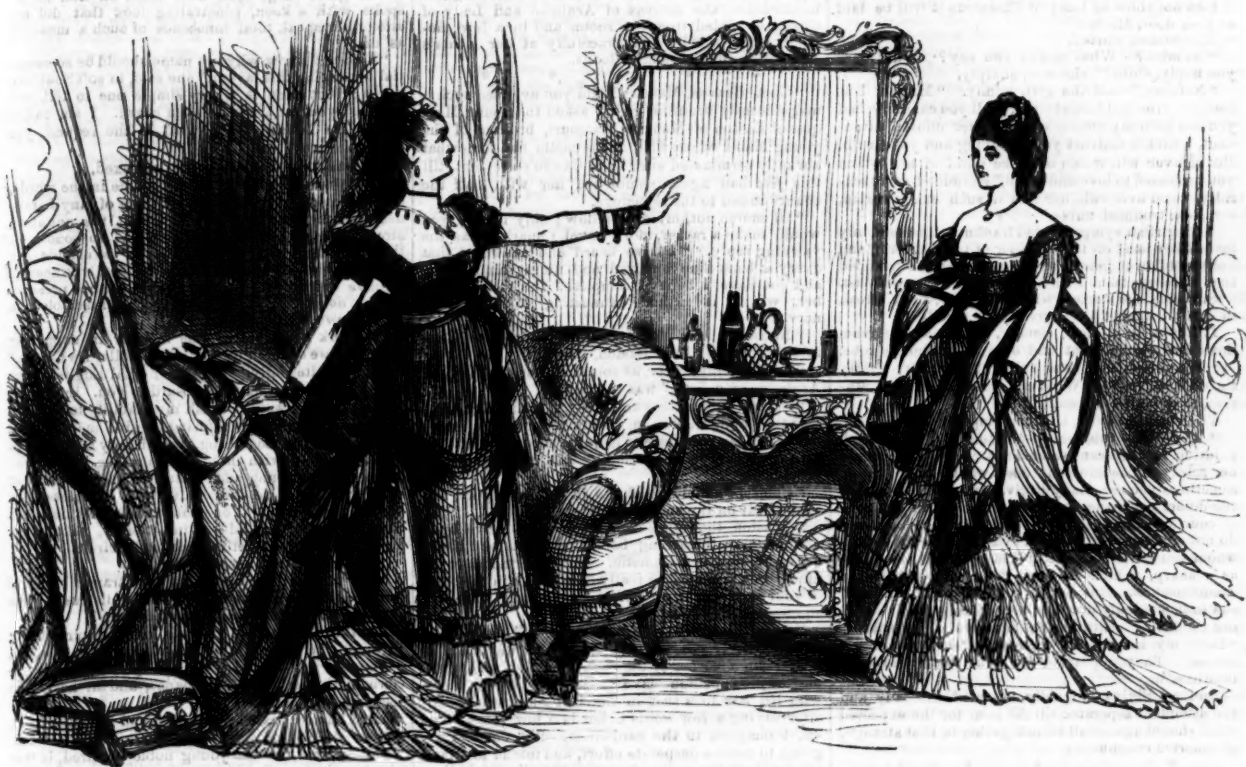
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No. 491.—VOL. XIX.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 28, 1872.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[TWO CLAIMS FOR ONE HEART.]

ELGIVA, OR, THE GIPSY'S CURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Snapt Link," "Evelyn's Plot," "Sybil's Inheritance," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XI.

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken lords and ladies gay;
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we.
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

"LADY ELGIVA, shall I crave one favour at your hands? I, who have so often dressed your infant form in other days, would fulfil the same office to-night, when you are to appear for the first time as mistress of your father's castle," said Marian Oliver as she attended her young lady through the suite of saloons which were to be thrown open for the first time for many long years on the evening in question at a grand, long-anticipated ball.

Elgiva's thoughts were perhaps far distant at that moment, for she started as if a pistol had been fired off at her ears, and her answer was wide of the immediate purport of the question.

"Marian, it is just that which makes all this splendour hateful to me, when I think of the tragedy enacted before my birth which made me heiress of the vast domain that ought never to have been mine, Marian, is it not true that you were nurse to that poor child who met with such a dreadful fate?"

Marian's features seldom changed. It was long years since she had felt the warm blood mount to her worn cheeks, or tears moisten her dusky eyes. Still there was an uneasy flash, a slight frown on her brow, which proved that the question was not altogether indifferent to her.

"Why do you wish to know? Better ignorance than knowledge," was the stern reply. "But if your brain is fevered on such subjects let it suffice you to learn that I had been known to your unfortu-

nate relative in former days, and when the second child of his marriage was expected it was his pleasure that I should take charge of his heir; but the infant girl died almost before she saw the light, and from that day there was a foreshadowing of the future over the doomed race. The mother drooped, the earl grew haggard and gloomy, and the infant Lord Chetwode's loss seemed but a crisis to the threatening storm, the accomplishment of the spoken curse."

"They were not happy then, though the countess Isabel was an heiress—eh, Marian?" resumed the girl, turning away her head from her companion's gaze.

"She was. It has been the fate of the race to swell its possessions by such marriages," returned the attendant. "The lands and countship of Arnheim were united to the possessions and title of Morecombe by the bridal of the English earl with the German heiress. Then the estates of Chetwode passed in the same manner with the marriage of Lord Morecombe to his cousin, their sole heiress, on condition that the name was substituted so long as the property was retained and enjoyed. Whether happiness went with the golden bait only the wedded pair could tell. But the strange tales that were whispered about were never spoken or countenanced by me. Still," she resumed, "that does not touch on the petition I preferred, Lady Elgiva. Will you permit me to array you in your ball dress, even as I may some day claim to assist at your bridal toilet?"

Elgiva shrugged her shoulders impatiently.

"It is all odious, repulsive to me," she said; "the very gathering of a crowd and clang of music and noise of feet are so hateful while the angel of death still hovers over the castle. Marian, do you believe he is safe? Are you certain he will live?" she asked, hurriedly. "I dare not even think that I may be the cause of death—his very murderer, in fact. Oh! Marian, speak the truth, the solemn truth. You have seen illness and death full many a time. Tell me, is he safe, or—"

Marian's lips pressed together firmly, as if to hide the natural response that rose to their parted framing.

"Too safe," she replied, impatiently. "It would be better for the heiress of such noble lands and blood that a poor, humble vagrant should disappear from her path like melting snow. Lady, think only of your bounden duty, or, mark me, the curse that rested on Oscar, Earl of Morecombe, and his issue, will pass to you, as a sharer in like sin."

"What sin? What share?" she exclaimed, eagerly. But Marian suddenly placed her hand on her lips.

"Hush!" she said, "hush! it is vain to pry into what I would not reveal were I on the rack. Child," she continued, with a strange emotion, that made her for the moment almost royal in her dignity of mien, "I would do much, sacrifice much for you. There is perhaps no human being who has touched my hard heart more tenderly than yourself. It has been my fate to crush every feeling, petrify and numb every affection with a death-hand. But for you I would do much, risk much, and I implore you to submit to my counsel and accept the will of destiny as your inevitable fate. The heiress of Arnheim and Chetwode should rather be occupied with the claims of her high calling than throwing herself like a poor coast-guard at the very head of an aspiring vagrant, already bound to one of his own kith and rank."

A spasm of strange jealousy shot through the lady's heart more powerful than any other argument of the stately duenna.

"It is false, utterly false," she said, rousing herself to some degree of haughty dignity. "But it matters not to me. If there is no such miserable anomaly as death and revelling in the same house to be feared all else is as nothing. Now let us speak of your wild fancy. I care not who plays maid at my toilet so long as I am not altogether hideous," she added, with a half-careless, half-bitter smile, "and if Lena arranges my hair you can do the rest at your will."

"If Lena does her part at these rich coils," replied the woman, touching the massive tresses with her long fingers, "and I array you in your gorgeous robes—yes, you will have services then that a queen might envy; yet I confess the lovely heiress may not

be unworthy of such tending. Well, so be it. Few need scorn to set off the rich tresses and dainty beauty of such a creature," she murmured, rather to herself than to her lady.

It was a singular mingling of deference and pride that fairly perplexed Elgiva's young brain; but she had ever believed the old dependant slightly diseased or stricken by grief in her mental faculties, and she made no comment on the apparent presumption of such words.

"Then it shall be so," she said, gently. "No one else shall preside at my dressing-room to-night, and if I do not shine as Lady of Chetwode it will be laid at your door, Marian."

The woman started.

"At mine? What would you say? What dare you imply, child?" she said, sharply.

"Nothing," said the girl, calmly. "Marian, I at least am true and honest; but, I tell you candidly, had you not been my mother's friend, her chosen attendant, I should distrust your meaning and your truth. But Heaven will watch over the child of her whom you professed to love and serve," she added, reproachfully, "and over-rule her foes if such exist, Marian, my poor, troubled nurse."

With girlish sympathy and frankness she suddenly leaned her head on the shoulder of the tall form, and her tears flowed gently on the robe that was wrapped in picturesque fashion across the finely developed bust.

Suddenly she started, with faint cry, and a streak of blood betrayed the source of the weal.

It flowed in a slow, slender, but constant stream down her white throat and over her shoulder robe.

"You hurt me!" she said, shriekingly. "My throat is wounded. What can you have there, Marian, to inflict such a stab?"

The woman smiled, half contemptuously.

"It is but this sharp-pointed pin," she said, pointing to a crescent-shaped touch pin that secured her robe. "The crescent does wound and triumph sometimes you see, Lady Elgiva, and the children of the desert guide the destinies of the proud denizens of courts and camps. Take the warning, lady, and do not stoop again in love or sympathy to those with whom you have no natural kindred, but they turn as a sharp, venomous serpent on such unwelcome condescension. But let us speak of other matters," she said, suddenly drawing herself away, and assuming the stinging attitude and manner of denunciation.

"Does my lady see any alteration necessary in the rooms? They appear to my poor taste well, might, faultless."

And as Elgiva languidly assented the lady and the attendant separated till the hour for the expected toilet should again call them together in that strange, ill-assorted communion.

Lady Elgiva stood in half-smiling, half-bitter contemplation of her own fair form as the attendants desisted from their labours, and seldom had mirror reflected a rarer and more picturesque style of loveliness or toilet.

Lena had been allowed her own, wayward taste in the lady's culture, and closely yet artfully she had wound the rich bands of satin hair within each other in bewildering coils, and surmounted the whole with an Oriental silver wreath, studded with rubies resembling eyes at intervals in its cunning devices. Then the flowing, simply made robe of black Indian gauze, worked richly with silver, set off the perfect negligence of the light form by its very absence of ornament. And to match the head-dress, a necklace, girdle and bracelets of exceeding richness completed the picturesque toilet of the Spanish looking heiress.

Marian looked at her with involuntary pride.

"Yes," she said, "you are beautiful—and yet—and yet if beauty could have availed, the dead would not have so early slept in their long homes and the living been bound to carry out the doom. Child, let this be my offering on this memorable day," she added, hastily slipping a ruby cross on the silver necklet. "Nay, do not refuse. It was worn by your mother on the day when she first listened to love's whisperings."

Before the girl could reply she had gone from the room, and Lena and the heiress were alone.

"Lady, you are indeed one for man to worship," said the gipsy, admiringly. "Alas, for those who are scorched by the sunbeams instead of basking in their brightness!"

"Say rather I was born to be a helpless slave," returned Elgiva, impatiently. "Lena, I would gladly change places with you this night, and keep your watch rather than listen to rapid flatteries and grating mince. Then that hateful prince, with his cold and imperious tyranny, that makes me choke and writhe under its insults, he will be my jailer all the night, while he has no more love for me than for the meanest servant in this household. Oh! if I but dared to fling back all his deceitful falsehoods and tell him that he is unmasked—even in his full treachery and baseness!"

Lena smiled sadly. Perhaps she knew too well that the unprincipled wickedness of the foreign suitor of her lady was unsuspected by her; but her lips were sealed, only to be opened by the one event that could emancipate her from her oath.

Life or death—a life of misery or death of shame—should be averted at any cost; but, save in such a prospect, the gipsy girl's voice must be mute.

The loud ringing of the hall bell, the clatter of hoofs and flashing of lamps heralded the arrival of some of the crowd of guests, and, with a deep-drawn sigh and a whispered "Be watchful" to her singular handmaiden, the heiress of Arnheim and Lady of Chetwode glided from the room, and in a few moments stood proudly and gracefully at her father's side within the gorgeous saloons.

"Good Heaven, Maurice! did you ever see such a magnificently beautiful girl?" asked the young Marquis of Easton of Maurice Harcourt, brother of the young Mabel whose visit at the castle had somewhat abruptly terminated after Juan Castro's accident, till this file had again summoned her with half the county round to the rejoicings.

"Of course not, my dear fellow; only I wish you would make a rather more novel remark," was the yawning reply. "I have heard and answered that query at least nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and you have, I believe, completed the round number, which is rather exhausting to a fellow's nerves."

"Nonsense, man. Of whom do you suppose I am talking?" asked Lord Easton, sharply.

"Of Lady Elgiva, or, as some call her, the Lady of Arnheim, of course," was the reply.

"Stupidly premature and hasty in your judgment," said the young nobleman, calmly; "but I can rather better excuse you since it is quite recently that my own eyes have been dazzled by this new star in the firmament."

"Come, I should think, to judge from your extreme heat on the subject," returned Maurice. "My dear Easton, the rooms contain, I believe, five hundred or more breathing beings, and jets and lamps beyond human arithmetic. The thermometer is ninety in the shade. I really dare not go in the blaze of your erratic meteor. Who is she and when did she appear?"

"That's just what no one can tell," replied the marquis, eagerly. "She suddenly was unveiled, as it were, in a corner of the conservatories, and without any companion save a foreign-looking man, who led her to a seat in the ball room, and then, after saying a few words to her in a low voice, went off, I imagine, to the card-room. But, come, I am going to make a desperate effort, and intend to attack the fortress by a coup de main, literally as well as figuratively—I mean lead her to the dance that is beginning."

Maurice Harcourt complied, though perhaps too well accustomed to his friend's raptures to attach very exciting importance to the fresh goddess he had discovered, or the mystery that surrounded her.

But as they came nearer to the sofa on which the vaunted beauty was seated in an attitude of unconscious but remarkable gracefulness he actually drew back for a moment in genuine wonder.

The face was one that is seldom seen in the saloons of the great, especially in our northern, insular land.

Such beauty of feature, such wild, fascinating dark almond eyes, such charming grace of form as artists give to the Italian contadine in their mountain homes, where the hereditary charm of their race is not fettered by conventional training or training was here.

She looked the very child of nature, yet so rarely lovely that no hand could have touched without spoiling the witchery that she spread round her by her untutored beauty and grace.

Her dress was costly, yet peculiar in its form and fabric.

A rich amber silk, fastened at the waist by an Indian scarf of great value, and with no ornament save an Oriental chain of scented and delicately carved beads, and bracelets seemingly of the same workmanship, was the whole toilet of the young stranger. And her rich hair was carefully gathered together by a large ivory comb that glittered in its darkness with filigree pearls through the rebellious tresses that flowed over her shoulders nearly to her waist.

The peculiarity of the whole costume did but test and prove the extreme beauty of the young stranger; and Maurice Harcourt for once caught the infection of his friend's enthusiasm.

"Wait one instant," he said, "I will go and find my sister Mabel, who, I dare say, can give us some key to the mystery, and perhaps introduce us to her more usual fashion than you are meditating."

And he hastily disappeared in the throng.

But Lord Easton had caught the eye of the young intruder in the scene, and their startled yet liquid

glance had well nigh deprived him of all self-control or remembrance of conventional laws.

The next moment he was at her side.

"Can you pardon my boldness, signora?" he said, half archly, half deprecatingly; "for I cannot suppose you trace your birth to this commonplace land. Will you imagine that some one else has informed you that I am Philip, commonly called Marquis of Easton? and will you complete your condescension by informing me by what name I may address you to ask the favour I have come to entreat?"

The girl's large eyes were fixed on him as he spoke with a keen, penetrating look that did not altogether speak total innocence of such a meaning as his.

"I do not know why my name should be so essential for asking this favour," she said, in soft Southern tones; "but mine is a very simple one to tell, and one that you cannot have even heard. I am called Amice De Castro. Now, what is the request you have to make?"

The marquis was somewhat perplexed. There was a cool, half-sarcastic tone in the words, albeit the soft accents deprived them of any harshness, but they banished any idea that the unknown stranger might consider his notice an honour, or that he could "walk over the course," to use his own strong expression, because he was the first who seemed to have discovered the remarkable chance presence of the debutante in the gay throng assembled in these crowded saloons.

"I think I can scarcely be in error in supposing that you are of foreign extraction, Milla De Castro," he began, hesitatingly. "And our formal English ways will, I daresay, seem very absurd to you. In short, I would almost willingly punish my inability to obtain a proper introduction by refusing to give me the name which is now beginning. See, already Lady Elgiva is leading it off with that German prince. My dear! she is far too young and pretty for such a place of solidity, and you he does wait well! I confess, and she looks a fairy. You cannot resist that doll-like Strauss waltz," he added, impatiently, taking her hand and gently impelling her to the circle.

Amice hung back for a moment.

Was it from ignorance that the strange child of the woods seemed so completely, or dimly distrustful of the suggestion of such a daring exhibition?

Another glance at Mabel's lovely figure flying through the throng with the lightning of a waltz, supported by the well-known perfection of the German in the waltzing dance, and all hesitation seemed banished.

Lord Easton passed his arm round the little form, and in an instant they were floating along. Yes, "floating," for, as the young noble declared, it was like treading on air to carry her along the whirling circle.

In truth the girl's natural symmetry of limb and free woodland life had been a good preparation for the lesson she had acquired in foreign lands and rivalled the conventional skill even of the best English trained dancers.

Here many rounds had been traversed every eye was fixed on the exquisite grace of her performance and romantic beauty of her form.

"By Jove! she must be a professional—never saw any one off the stage dance like that," observed one of the guests as he paused in his own performance with Mabel Harcourt. "It is not fair to bring a ballet dancer to get every one else to a pose like this, is it, Miss Harcourt?"

The girl did not reply. Her eyes were fixed in bewilderment on the stranger.

A dim idea that she had once seen those brilliant eyes, those glorious features before haunted her brain. But the sole impression that she could trace was one so improbable, ay, so fantastic, that she at once relinquished it.

"I do not believe the count or Elgiva either would dream of such a seduction," she replied. "But, see, Lord Easton is going up to the band. What is he about to do?"

The waltz had concluded at last.

Amice had fairly crushed down all rivals by her own wondrous excellence, and even Elgiva remained in misty wonder and doubt as to the identity and the advent of this remarkable stranger.

Her first impression was like Mabel's, that she had seen the dark beauty before.

But then she was fain to conclude that this foreigner had been brought there by some of the numerous guests, after she herself had left the port of reception, and, had the prince been more tolerated by her, she would probably have inquired of him the possibility of his own acquaintance with the new comer.

But ere she could dwell on her course of action the band had struck up a singular and little-known air, and Lord Easton and his partner once more came on the scene.

It was a tarantula—that exquisite Spanish dance that seems so unnatural an exile in any but its own clime.

If any one present had believed in the performance of some aspiring debutante, the illusion was dispelled by that exquisitely bewitching girl.

Only whispers of delight and admiration came faintly buzzing round till the dance was finished. Then an irrepressible burst of applause came from the astonished throng.

"Who is she—where on earth did she spring from? What a lovely *trousseau* for the count at his daughter's fête!" was buzzed about as Lord Easton and the girl disappeared as if by magic from the crowd.

"Where can I take you after this triumph?" asked the young marquis, after they had passed by a side door into a quiet boudoir, which entrance, strangely enough, seemed familiar to the stranger. "Would you prefer quiet or will you permit your admirers to offer you their homage? Any way, the evening is stamped. There will be no one brave enough to exhibit after your perfect, apple-like performance."

The girl smiled with a proud, careless scorn. "They need not fear," she said. "I am tired, my lord, and shall at once retire from the scene. Thank you for your courtesy that has helped me to recall earlier days."

She held out her hand with a bewitching smile as she reached the French window that opened on a balcony, and prepared to make her exit.

"No, no; we cannot part thus," he exclaimed, clasping her hands. "It would be too maddening to appear thus, and vanish like a vision of light. At least tell me where you are staying—how I can obtain another interview. It matters not at what distance or with what difficulty. Only be merciful, let me see you once again."

"Hush! do not fear. Perhaps when you least expect it we may meet; long ere that you will forget the humble Amice for the richly gifted heiress. Farewell!"

Ere he was aware her hand was drawn hastily from his clasp, and she vanished on the balcony in the comparative darkness.

Another moment and he had rushed out after her in the open air, where he himself was a comparative stranger.

The balcony was some ten feet at least from the ground, and seemed to run round that wing of the castle without any stops that the Marquis of Euston could discern at any reasonable distance.

Yet the girl had vanished and without any apparent mode of exit.

The marquis leaned over the balustrade and gazed on the obscurity beneath, to which his eyes were gradually becoming accustomed, without being able to discern one trace of the fair vision which had so entranced him.

"Where on earth can she be? Is she a ghost in reality?" he exclaimed, in hopeless bewilderment.

But only a few notes of a Spanish air floating in the distance, and a light laugh that had something of mockery in it, rewarded his earnest effort to follow his bright fairy.

Perplexed, disappointed, perhaps indignant, he re-entered the house, only to encounter the half-unbelieving, half-sarcastic questions and accounts of the group who had witnessed his temporary triumph.

"Perhaps she can vanish through closed windows or transform herself into a flower," laughed Maurice Harcourt as he perceived his friend's discomfiture.

"Lady Elgiva, is this person known to you?" asked Prince Charles, in a low tone, as with provoking devotion he led his hostess to the upper room.

"Certainly not," she said, coldly. "Only of late I am accustomed to see those whom I neither know nor wish to welcome here entertained in my father's castle."

"Then she appeared and vanished in the same sudden and mysterious manner," resumed the prince, without appearing to notice the insinuation.

Elgiva bowed coldly.

"I never even spoke to her," she said. "nor can I imagine how she can have found her way to my own sitting-room, or from the balcony, especially in that remarkable dress."

"Ah, of course then she is Cinderella, re-enacted," replied the prince, carelessly.

But still Elgiva could perceive his brow contracted and for some time he was lost in deeper thought than befitted the gay scene, his abstraction seeming quite beyond his own power to control.

CHAPTER XII.

It seemed to those within the wall.

A very prophetic of their fall.

An undefined and sudden thrill.

That beat with quicker pulse, ashamed.

Of that strange sense its silence framed.

Such as a sudden passing bell.

The midnight chime had long passed, and the small hours were sounding three, ere the revels of the castle were over and its inmates hushed in sleep.

Even then there were wakeful—ay, and wandering forms in the vast mansion.

There was a slight female figure, wrapped in a scarlet, loose peignoir, with her dark hair thickly coiled in rich braids at the back of her small head, in readiness for the repose of the night, who noiselessly glided along that same gallery which had been the mode of Lena's transit from her lady's room to Juan's chamber.

The girl held a lamp in her hand that ever and anon flashed thrillingly on some portrait of cavalier or dame on the wall-covered walls, that made its fair descendant shudder with involuntary terror at the ghostly-looking apparition.

For it was Elgiva, the sweet heiress of the long line, who thus dared the nocturnal walk when all as she trusted besides herself were sleeping.

Poor girl, she had kept up bravely throughout the heavy trial which that evening had been to her nerves and spirits.

With illness and danger hanging over one who had so strangely fascinated her young heart, one whom she looked on as having well nigh sacrificed himself in his love for herself—with the ancestor she hated publicly, exhibited as her father's favoured guest—yet more, with that remarkable and ominous apparition of the strange, lovely girl who some haunting and painful associations warned her might bode no good to her and hers in that daring intrusion—no wonder that as she passed the portraits that had arrested Lena Farina's attention she flashed her lamp in their features; albeit so well known to her for long days and weeks; and as she gazed, the conviction strengthened in her mind that the stranger of the ball-room—the idiot of the throng—bore a strong resemblance to the dark features of her preserver, and yet more to the gipsy girl who had retold the first tidings of trouble and misfortune to her own careless and buoyant heart.

What did it signify? and why did the heart of the heiress throb painfully as she averted her glance and hurried rapidly on?

Who could tell save the inexorable fate that hangs over the children of men?

Elgiva's own heart might perhaps have warned her of evil, but the courage of her race and the love that burned in her young soul crushed back such misgivings.

And eagerly, rapidly, with a firm will though trembling feet, the young Lady Elgiva glided between those shadowy figures till she reached the large oak door, which swung behind her like a portal between the past and future, and, passing across the broad corridor, opened the door of the wounded man's chamber. She could not rest, poor girl, without some certainty of Juan's state.

She knew that each hour might decide the result of his flickering return to health and consciousness, and, if Lena was the watcher, there would be little fear of her visit being betrayed, or misconstrued. Yet as she noiselessly advanced into the room and approached the sufferer's bed, as if to claim the comfort and the support of Lena's presence and Lena's sympathy, she timidly glanced at the figure that was ensconced in a large chair by Juan's bedside. The lamp was but dim on that distant table, where it was placed beyond the reach of the invalid; and the thick, heavy curtains yet farther obscured the view of the tenants of the chamber; yet Elgiva's light could scarcely deceive her in the spectacle that met her view.

The female who reposed, with a kind of hangdog grace, in the luxurious chair that stood by Juan's bedside, was young and lovely, and of no plebeian stamp.

But it was not Lena's sweet, expressive face and liquid eyes that met Elgiva's astonished gaze. It was one perhaps more strictly beautiful, but of hangdog and repellant air, that seemed like some proud and evil spirit guarding its charge from the approach of hope and rescue; and what seemed even more ominous to the trembling Elgiva, it was the same strange intruder who had created such sensation among the evening's guests—the same dark eyes and peculiar features that had attracted her attention and warned her of evil in the Black Wood on that memorable and fatal ride.

In a brief moment she recoiled, half uncertain whether to proceed in her purpose, but the fear for Juan and the consciousness of what was due to her own self respect checked her retreat.

"May I ask what can have brought you here, young lady?" she said, in the subdued tones which befitted the occasion. "It is strange, and, pardon me, unaccountable intrusion in my father's castle, and to a stranger's room."

"Stranger!" said the girl, who may as well be called by her proper name, Amice, at the moment when she was recognized by the countess. "That is well said; only it is better applied to you, proud lady. Juan Castro belongs to me by birth and blood, by love and love's vows. Leave him to me. He has suffered enough at your hands, and for your sake."

Elgiva's heart sank with a deadly faintness at the assertions of her too beautiful and dangerous rival, but the sound of Juan's words was still in her ears, his looks of pleading, devoted love in her memory, and she would not degrade him and herself by doubts of his truth.

"That is nothing to me; it rests entirely with you and your relative, if he is one," she replied, proudly. "But so long as he is in my father's castle, and under my care, I can only permit these I myself choose to be near him. Where is Lena?" she went on, hurriedly, looking around. "Does she know you are here? Has she deserted her post?"

"She cannot live without rest, I presume," said the girl, bitterly. "She has gone to her own sitting-room, but I am here expressly to watch in her place, only with yet more anxious love and more certain right," she added, significantly.

"Then if Lena is fatigued I will arrange for her place to be taken," said the lady, proudly. "I do not wish any one to steal in as you have done, unasked and unknown. I will remain here myself till some one is able to take my place," she continued, with gradually increasing indignation; "by noon, as the morning comes I wish you to leave this castle, and be assured that the patient is in care and skillful hands, who will not let him want for cure or tenderness."

Amice started up from her chair, and stood with folded arms and flashing eyes before her nobly born rival.

"I leave him to your care and tenderness!" she said, bitterly. "Proud, arrogant girl, know that I and I alone have the right to show such tenderness, to sit by his side, to watch his suffering, to care for his pale brow, his damp lips."

She hastily and passionately pressed her lips to his forehead and mouth, with an impetuous force that might well have aroused the languid patient from his half-unconscious terror.

"Then who are you—his wife?" asked Elgiva, pride giving her calmness and courage.

Amice hesitated.

"In heart and love and vows I am," she said, with ill-concealed embarrassment.

"Then I am bound to watch over and tend him till he is well enough to choose for himself," returned Elgiva, calmly, though her heart was torn by jealousy, torturing jealousy which she stored for betray. "Your assertion cannot be received while your notions are so bold and daring. Since you are not his wife there can be no pretence for your claiming shelter under this roof. See, the day is dawning," she added, with a glance at Amice's remarkable attire. "You cannot appear in that garish dress. I will lend you a cloak to hide it; and money—if it is useful—to seek your rightful home."

Amice laughed scornfully.

"Ah, you are jealous! poor, weak creature that you are," she said. "Yes, you—with all your wealth and rank and gifts—stoop to such pitiful baseless. Because I could draw admiration in your own name, make people forget the queen of the house—because I, the unknown Amice, have done this, you are ready to turn me into the cold darkness and banish me from him who is mine—yes, from our early years, my very own."

Perhaps the voice was raised in the excited passion of the girl, or else the touch of Amice's lips had aroused the weak, languid patient from his unconscious, dreamlike state. For a sudden flash of recognition, drawn from the sufferer's dimmed eyes as they turned on Elgiva's pale face, which came gazing at him with half-reproachful address.

His lips murmured some half-audible words that went straight to the hearts of both the beautiful girls who stood by his bedside.

"Safe, my beloved—thank Heaven," came in faint, faltering but undoubted accents from his lips.

Amice clasped her hands as if the very nails would pierce the white flesh to hide the inward agony of her soul, while her eyes flashed vengeance on her innocent and blushing rival.

But before any more could be spoken of love or of hate the door had again opened, and the tall figure of Martin Oliver passed quietly to the side of the young watchers.

"What is all this unseemly altercation here?" she said, in a low, firm tone. "Lady Elgiva, this is no place for you. Leave the patient to me while your maid rests. And you, young lady," she added, with a sneering glance at Amice that Elgiva did not comprehend, "let me conduct you to a room till you are sought for by them to whom you belong. I had no thought of such a scene as this when I permitted you to watch for a brief space by your relative's couch."

There was a strange exchange of places, as it would seem, between the young heiress and her duenna, and for a few moments Elgiva yielded to the determined will of the woman who had saved her infancy.

But in another instant she regained her self-possession and dignity.

"This is a sudden, unaccountable tone for you to take, Marian, in your lord's house to his only child. But I pardon it for the sake of your old services, only it must not be persisted in or repeated. It is my pleasure that you should remove this young person at once from the room, and see that she leaves the castle ere the morning is far advanced. I shall remain here till you return, and then you can watch till Lena is refreshed and able to resume the duties I have assigned her."

There was a dignity mingled with resolution in Elgiva's tone and look that could admit only of obedience or of open and daring rebellion to her will.

And after a brief hesitation Marian took Amice's hand and almost forcibly led her away.

"Foolish child," she whispered. "I thought you had more control over your passions. How can you be worthy of your vocation if you are thus ungovernable? Girl," she added, warningly, "you have been early trusted for your father's sake and from his pledge. But if you would merit more honour—if you would carry out your mission—you will be secret and calm. Mark me, there have been those who have died from betraying the great cause, and others who have languished in captivity till they prayed for death. See that neither fate is yours, ere it is too late."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

NOVEL BLOWING APPARATUS.—A novel blowing apparatus has been erected at a colonial foundry, constructed on a similar principle to the "troupe" of the Catalan forge. At present it is only used for blowing the ordinary blacksmith's fire, but eventually it will, no doubt, be used for the smelting furnace. It consists of an empty barrel, or quarter-cask, stood on end behind the fire, to the centre of which a blast-pipe, from 2 in. to 3 in. in diameter, is fixed. On the top of the cask is another pipe, the same size as the blast-pipe, some 6 ft. in height, with a funnel-shaped top. Just above this there is a horizontal water-pipe of the ordinary service size, with a nozzle, having an aperture of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter, fixed at right angles—that is, pointing down the pipe leading to the barrel, down which there rushes with considerable force a tiny jet of water, which causes a rush through the blast-pipe far superior both in power and steadiness, it is said, to any that can be obtained from the common blacksmith's bellows. The waste water, which is very limited in quantity, escapes through a pipe attached for the purpose to the bottom of the barrel.

THE OXYHYDRIC LIGHT.—In relation to the oxygen light of Tessie du Motay it may be stated that M. P. Thomas, acting under instructions from the Paris Society of Civil Engineers, has recently presented to that body a report upon the process. This report simply treats of technical advantages and disadvantages, leaving out of sight the economical question, which is somewhat to be regretted in view of the indistinct statement of the causes which have led to its removal from some of the streets of Paris where it had been introduced. The conclusions arrived at are the following:—(1) Theoretically, the combustion of oxygen does not increase the illuminating power of a given volume of gas. (2) Practically, however, it enables a burner to consume four times the quantity of gas that can be burned in air, without detriment to the utilization of the light which may be developed. In particular, it utilizes the entire luminous capacity of the gases, however rich, and in almost any quantity. Consequently, it would be disadvantageous to employ it for ordinary street-lighting, on account of the limited quantity of gas consumed by the burners, the only advantage gained being the beauty of the light, provided the gas is very rich. Here, unquestionably, would come in the objection of expense from the complication of the apparatus. But it is very advantageous, and the more so in direct proportion to the richness of the gases employed—for great centres of light (sun-burners, etc.), where a large volume of gas is to be consumed without loss.

PAPER FABRICS.—The doorways of the galleries near the Indian Court in the International Exhibition are hung with paper curtains which have some resemblance to chintz. The fabric is the invention of Mr. Eugene Pretto, and is something like Japanese paper. In its manufacture various animal and vegetable substances are used, such, for instance, as buffalo skins, the intestines of animals, the fibres produced from the various nettles and grasses, barks of trees, and from flax, hemp and cotton. These substances, mixed together in varying proportions, are treated much the same as the materials for paper are treated, that is to say, disintegrated, purified, bleached, rolled, pressed and finally printed

upon. The fabric produced differs, however, from ordinary paper in this, that it is not readily torn, is somewhat elastic, and soft enough to fall readily into graceful folds. The inventor claims for it, further, that it will resist the action of the weather and sun, and that damp does nothing more than make it more soft and yielding to the touch. The fabric at present has been principally applied to window curtains, roller-blinds, bed-curtains, and for the covering of walls, not so much in the way of ordinary paper-hangings, but more as chintzes or tapestries are used. The patterns are an imitation of the brocaded silks of Lyons, chintzes, and cretonnes. The inventor, however, has in view the production of a material that shall go much farther in superseding woven fabrics, in the shape of coverings for chairs, and even as carpets for floors. The colours are less liable to fade than in chintzes, as they are printed principally in body colours, and will keep clean the longer, as dust is not absorbed, but can be brushed off. The prices of the curtains vary from 5s. to 30s. per pair, complete; the material may also be bought in the piece. This application of paper is practically new so far as this country is concerned, though the Japanese have long ago found out that it could be applied to such purposes as what we call drapery is used for.

TRY HIM ONCE MORE.

His case looks bad, I own, sir, very bad;
But let us try and save, not crush the lad;
He feels his guilt o'en to the heart's deep core:
Try him once more!

Deal with him, sir, this tending erring one,
As you would have another serve your son.
Youth is impatient; 'tis his first offence—
Send him not hence!

If you forgive him now, and hide his shame,
'Twill fire his heart, perhaps, to earn a name,
And show his gratitude, as ne'er before:
Try him once more!

He seems a likely lad—his eye is bright,
His manly limbs are pleasant to the sight;
Let him go on, sir, still in your employ:
Pardon the boy!

Give him good counsel, in a gentle way,
Tell him the story of your boyhood's day;
Recount your victories and temptations o'er:
Try him once more!

A prison cell would never better things,
For self-respect and hope might then take wings;
You say yourself it is his first offence:
Send him not hence!

As years pass by, and he becomes a man,
Guided, it may be, by your own wise plan,
These words may greet you at life's common goal:
"You have saved a soul."

M. A. K.

HISTORIC LACE.

HISTORIC LACE, that is lace which has belonged to any celebrated personage, and to which an exact date can be assigned, is of the greatest interest to the student, but unfortunately of rare occurrence. Perhaps the oldest specimen known, if tradition is to be believed, is a part of a priest's vestment, preserved under glass in the cathedral of Prague, said to be the work and the gift of Anne of Bohemia, queen of Richard II. of England. It is a piece of embroidery, into which network is introduced, and very like in workmanship coverlets of many centuries later; but at Prague it has always remained carefully treasured as the work of "Good Queen Anne," as the English were wont to style her. Some years since a portion of the vestment was taken off and washed, when it fell into holes and was set aside in the sacristy. From this washed piece a specimen was procured by a traveller, and is now in the South Kensington Museum.

In the Musée des Dentelles, at Le Puy, is preserved gold lace which goes back to the Valois Kings of France, to Henry II. and his sons, and in the Musée de Cluny, at Paris, are the wire-mounted ruffs of Queen Marie de Medicis, of flimsy, ill-made geometric lace, which, if they are to be taken as a specimen of the art of that period, are little to boast of. The blood-stained shirt of her consort, Henry IV., worn when he fell by the knife of the assassin Ravallac, has passed into the collection of Madame Tussaud. It was among some property once belonging to Cardinal Mazarin, and Charles X. is said to have offered two hundred guineas for the relic. It is ornamented with outwork round the collar and breast, probably similar to one which appears in the accounts of his first wife, Margaret, Queen of Navarre, "four breadths of point coupée to make a trimming for the shirt of my love the king, at 18 livres each."

Christening suits are handed down in many old families to which a precise date may be affixed, and we are told that a mantle trimmed with outwork, said to have been used in 1501 to cover "the infant Anne Boleyn" on the occasion of her being christened, has been preserved for many generations in a Welsh family, lineal descendants of Sir Thomas Boleyn, father of the ill-fated queen.

A vestment enriched with outwork worn by Mary, Queen of Scots, at her execution, is carefully kept as an heirloom at Buckland, Berks, seat of Sir William Throckmorton, where it is shown to all visitors to the castle. The lace round the neck and sleeves is described to be a "sort of point or needle-made lace, besides which there is an insertion down the front, and on the shoulders a kind of drawn-work wrought in the linen."

The lace-edged veil worn by Queen Mary at her execution, which we see represented in her portrait, is described by a contemporary as "a dressing of lawn edged with bone lace." It was long kept as an heirloom by the exiled Stuarts, until Cardinal York bequeathed it to their faithful adherent, Sir John Cox Hippsley. On one occasion, when exhibiting the veil at Baden, Sir John thoughtlessly threw it over the head of the Queen of Bavaria. Her majesty shuddered at the omen and precipitately withdrew from the apartment, evidently much alarmed at the incident, and could not be persuaded to rejoin the party.

In the house at Stratford-upon-Avon where Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's wife, was born, is to be seen, preserved in an oaken chest, according to the ancient fashion of the country, a pillow-case and a large sheet made of homespun linen. Down the middle of the sheet is an ornamental openwork or outwork insertion, about an inch and a half deep, and the pillow-case is similarly decorated. They are marked "F. H.," and have always been used on special occasions by the Hathaway family.

This insertion, or "seaming lace," as it was called, appears about that period to have been universally used for uniting the breadths of linen instead of sewing a seam, a custom which still lingers on in many parts of Europe. The wardrobe accounts of King James I. and his son, Prince Charles, abound in the employment of "seaming" lace employed for sheets, shirts, and other articles of linen.

The shirts worn by King Charles I. on the day of his execution, for the weather was cold and he wore two, one over the other, are, we understand, richly seamed and trimmed with lace. One is in the possession of the Earl of Aashburnham, the other of—Herbert, Esq. Some years since one of these two shirts was exhibited in the Loan Collection at South Kensington. There is also much good lace on the wax-work effigies in Westminster Abbey. King William wears a rich lace cravat and ruffles, and his consort, Queen Mary, has a lace tucker and double ruffled sleeves of the finest raised Venetian point. King Charles wears the same description of lace as Queen Mary. The Duchess of Buckingham, daughter of James II., has also fine raised lace; but the figures having been so often redressed it is difficult to assign any historic proof of the lace having belonged to the individuals on whose effigies it is placed.

THE King of Hanover has declared that he would not purchase the restitution of his estates at the cost of a renunciation of the crown.

A DOUBLE MEANING.—An hotel proprietor informs the public that "English, German, Italian, and Spanish are spoken here." If any one finds the language supply even shorter than at other hotels the proprietor explains that English, German, Italian and Spanish are spoken by the travellers who come to the hotel.

JEWELLERY.—A superb and valuable necklace and bracelet, completed by Messrs. Cass, of Regent Street, for his Highness the Khedive of Egypt, enriched with 125 fine brilliants, and containing nine ancient gold coins, of great rarity, of Arsinoe, Queen of Egypt, wife of Ptolemy II., who reigned about three centuries before the Christian era, has been recently added on loan to the jewellery galleries of the Exhibition. On the reverse of each coin there is a double cornucopia.

A BUTTERFLY INVASION.—Florence was invaded a few days ago by a prodigious quantity of butterflies. All the distance of the Lung'arno between the Piazza Manin and the Barriera, and in all the adjacent streets, the passage was almost obstructed by an extraordinary quantity of these insects that had swarmed in such thick clouds round the gaslights that the streets were comparatively dark. Fires were immediately lit by order of the municipality, and by the citizens themselves, upon which the butterflies burnt their wings. Half an hour afterwards one walked upon a layer formed by the bodies of the butterflies an inch thick. They were of a whitish colour, and some of the streets appeared as if covered with snow.



MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Eglantine,"
"The Three Passions," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Fair as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose image then was stamped upon her mind—
But once beguiled—and evermore beguiling;
Dazzling as that, oh! too transcendent vision,
To sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
And points the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
Soft as the memory of buried love. *Byron.*

ARTHUR EVERTON drank in every word uttered by Carmen, not believing it possible that so lovely and innocent a being could be guilty of anything bearing the slightest resemblance to a falsehood.

"I have lived here for some little time," continued Carmen, "with my only relative—a brother, who has property in this town, and has always evinced a preference for living in France rather than England. My name is Carmen Caruthers, and we are well connected."

"Carmen," repeated Arthur to himself, "I love Carmen already."

"Though I have had many admirers, and even suitors for my hand, being an heiress as well as having some personal attractions, I have always resolved to marry an Englishman, and when my heart is no longer in my keeping it will be in possession of a countryman of my own. I have seen you," she added, lowering her voice, and blushing with tender emotion—"you are English—you are a gentleman—"

She did not conclude her sentence. Blush succeeded blush, and she cleverly left him to imagine what was passing in her mind.

Arthur did what most young men in his position would have done; he sank on one knee before her, and, seizing her unresisting hand, so small, so white, so delicate, cried:

"You have loved me. Oh, Miss Caruthers!—oh, Carmen! if I may be allowed the liberty of calling you by your Christian name, let me hear the confession from your own lips. Tell me that I am not wrong in supposing that you were going to say so."

In a tone little above a whisper she replied, lowering her long eyelashes in bashful confusion:

"I have loved you!"

A momentary silence followed this avowal.

Her hand trembled under Arthur's earnest pressure, and she waited for him to speak, but it was in vain

[LOVE'S PRISONER.]

that he tried to find words to express his joy. His heart was full, though his lips remained silent.

At last, when Carmen felt she was again mistress of herself, she continued:

"In England I might perhaps have thrown myself in your way and contrived a meeting without subjecting myself to this compromising interview, but my brother, since our arrival in this town, has guarded me with a vigilance I have found it difficult if not impossible to escape. I have done wrong in bringing you hither, but I was determined to see you. Pardon my fault, for it was committed for your sake, and let me hear that I have not suffered a loss of respect in your eyes."

"Not in the least," he hastened to answer. "I can only repeat that I find it difficult even now to believe that you love me."

"Ah! if you could read my heart," she murmured. "I will believe it, though you may be trifling with me and the awakening from my dream may cost me my life."

"You are right," she said. "If I did not love you should I allow you to remain at my feet? and now, Arthur, do you love me?"

"With all my heart."

"Will you continue to love me always? Men are such fickle things that it is not easy to place confidence in them," exclaimed Carmen.

"For ever and ever—even beyond the grave," he answered, passionately.

"How many girls have heard the same confession from your lips before?"

The young man blushed a little as he remembered former passages in his life, but he replied, boldly:

"None. I never knew what love was until I saw you, and I swear on my honour to love you devotedly all my life."

The gipsy girl's heart bounded on hearing this declaration from the handsome, accomplished, and only son of Lord Kimbolton.

"I cannot doubt you," she said, "and I am very happy. Now I do not regret my boldness in sending for you. Your heart beats for me alone. I feel it, I know it, and I am satisfied, though I must ask you one more question. Have you never felt the smallest spark of affection for the beautiful Mercedes?"

Arthur Everton started.

"You know of my visits to Marshal Chabot's?" he said.

"I know all about you," Carmen answered, "more, much more than you may suppose."

"Your question is easily answered," he returned.

"Mercedes made no impression upon me, and if she

had it would have paled effectually after seeing you, as the stars do before the splendour of the rising sun."

"Thank you for the assurance," said Carmen. "I admit that I was foolish enough to be jealous of Mercedes—that is over, my doubts are set at rest. I give you my heart freely. It is a treasure which you must prize highly, for you receive my first love. I am a fatalist. When I saw you I exclaimed, 'I am his fate.' Do you accept your fate, Arthur?"

"Willingly," replied Arthur, who was about to pour out his soul in a rhapsody of burning words. He had not time.

The interview was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the servant, who seemed greatly agitated.

"Fly!" she exclaimed to Arthur Everton. "You have not a moment to lose! My master's suspicions are aroused! If you delay all will be lost!"

Carmen appeared to be terrified at this news.

"Go, Arthur," she said; "we will meet again. Go, and remember we love one another, and are betrothed in the sight of Heaven."

Pressing her hand to his lips, he hastened away, being led by his conductress through devious passages into the garden.

There they stopped.

"I will let you out by this gate," said the attendant, "and you will have little difficulty in retracing your steps to your lodgings. Soon you will see me again."

"Is this brother such an ogre that you are all afraid of him?" asked Arthur.

"Yes. If he found a man in the house at this time of night, and with his sister, I believe he would kill both, whatever the consequences might be."

"I hope Miss Carmen is in no danger?" said Arthur.

"Thanks to my timely intervention she is not, though she may be if you continue here talking," answered the woman.

"You are right," said Arthur. "I will go; but I entreat you to come quickly to me. My heart is on fire, and I shall know little peace till I see my divinity again."

The attendant smiled and gently pushed him out beyond the garden door.

It closed behind him, and he walked slowly towards the quay, delirious with delight at the happy adventure of which he was the hero.

No sooner had Arthur been hurried away by the servant than Izard entered the boudoir and sat down by his sister's side.

Carmen burst into a loud laugh.

"Did I do it well?" she asked.
 "My dear child, you are a splendid actress. You have mistaken your vocation. You should have gone upon the stage," replied Izard, with an approving smile.

"I could play the part of a queen with some success," answered Carmen. "But, after all, what are the triumphs of the stage to the realities of life? The world is my stage."

"Ancient Pistol says in the play, 'the world is my oyster, and I with sword will open it.' Braved we are going on the right tack now, and I can see that we shall be people of quality and distinction soon."

"You think that my poor boy has lost his heart?" said Carmen.

"Decidedly. His head is turned."

"If he should find me out!" exclaimed Carmen, thoughtfully.

"Once married that will matter little. Mrs. Everton, some day to be Lady Kimbolton, allow me to congratulate you," replied Izard, with mock politeness.

"What is to be done now?" she inquired.

"Wait patiently," said Izard. "I am a bit of an angler. When I hook a big fish I do not try to land him at once; I play with him, and when he is exhausted he falls easily into the landing-net. Everton's love will increase by delay. He already thinks himself the most fortunate of men."

"Is he not in reality?" asked Carmen, surveying her wondrous charms in a glass.

"That is a matter of opinion."

"Well, I will wait a few days."

"And you will act wisely. Only one thing disturbs me, and that is the thought of that vengeful Quirino. If he discovered us he would spoil all."

"He will never find us. I laugh at the ignorant fellow—half savage, half beast," said Carmen, scornfully.

"I wish I could," replied Izard, with a prolonged sigh.

After some farther conversation they retired to rest, fully satisfied with the success of their plan so far.

Three days glided away, during which Arthur Everton heard nothing of his divinity. He was mad with love and frantic at the delay. The name of Carmen was over on his lips.

Little did he suspect that she was the poor dancing girl whose part he had taken in the gambling saloon.

At last he received a note which said simply:

"To-night, at twelve, outside your house."

He was conducted as before to the house. His eyes were bandaged, and he was introduced into the same enchanting room, where he found Carmen more seductive than before.

"Oh, how I have suffered since we parted," he murmured as he knelt before her.

She raised him gently and placed him by her side, saying:

"Do you think I have not suffered too?"

"When will you introduce me to your brother?" asked Arthur. "I must ask his consent to our union at once."

"I fear he will not give it," replied Carmen. "He says I am too young to marry, and he often talks about a Russian duke of great wealth who paid me some attention when we went to Baden last year."

"I will kill this duke," said Arthur, mad with jealousy.

Suddenly a harsh and angry voice was heard outside exclaiming:

"Some man has entered my house; he shall not go out alive! Guard all the doors! If he attempts to escape, shoot him! We must protect ourselves against burglars!"

"Is it my brother?" cried Carmen, who seemed inclined to faint with fear. "He knows all. We are betrayed—we are lost!"

"No," replied Arthur; "he will listen to reason when he knows who I am."

"Ah, you do not know my brother. The Caruthers' blood is not easily cooled. He acts first and reflects afterwards."

As if overcome with terror Carmen fell back in his arms, and Arthur was placed in an embarrassing position when the door opened violently and Izard burst into the room, holding a pistol in his hand.

At the sight of Carmen swooning in a stranger's arms a sinister smile spread itself over Izard's face, and his eyes rolled with a significant ferocity.

"Is it possible that a lady who is the descendant of one of the oldest families in England should act thus?" he exclaimed. "To what a depth of degradation am I dragged down! I believed her pure as an angel, and chaste as a Madonna, and I find her in the middle of the night in the arms of a lover."

"Sir," replied Arthur, "you insult in a cowardly manner the virtue of a lady who does not deserve your taunts."

"Who are you, sir?" cried Izard, with increasing anger; "and by what right do you introduce yourself into my house at this hour?"

"I came to see my affianced wife."

A cold sneer overspread Izard's mouth as he replied:

"Carmen will doubtless give me some explanation of this singular assertion."

Carmen roused herself and said:

"It is the truth, brother; we have given our hearts to one another in the sight of Heaven."

"That is very well in a romance; but you are not married. Think of the scandal of such a scene as this."

"I am willing to marry your sister on the spot if you can find a priest to solemnize the marriage service," exclaimed Arthur.

"Do you know who I am?" cried Izard. "My name is Caruthers. Our family came in with the Conqueror, and you dare to aspire to a union with our house. Who are you?"

"The only son of Lord Kimbolton, an English peer, and an officer in the navy."

"Perhaps I have been hasty," replied Izard, lowering his haughty and indignant tone; "but your presence here seemed to me to be an outrage. However, you have deeply compromised my sister. You seem to love one another, and, for the honour of the family, I must consent to this marriage. You must leave this house either dead or married."

"You consent?" exclaimed Arthur Everton, joyfully.

"I do, because there is no help for it. You must be good enough to obey my orders."

"Willingly."

"Carmen, retire at once to your chamber," continued Izard.

Smiling affectionately at her lover, Carmen, who simulated the greatest terror in the presence of her brother, went away without a word.

"You, sir," said Izard, "will be pleased to consider yourself a prisoner in this apartment until to-morrow."

"And then?" queried Arthur.

"Then I shall go to the Protestant church, obtain the services of the minister, and arrange for your marriage with Miss Carmen Caruthers before the British consul at the Consulate."

"I have nothing to say against that arrangement, and beg to thank you very sincerely for your kindness," replied Arthur.

"You have nothing to thank me for," exclaimed Izard, brusquely. "I do not give you my sister's hand; I let you take it, that is all, to save my honour. I have made a choice between your death and your marriage, deciding in favour of the latter, because it seemed to me the less perilous course."

"My obligation," said Arthur, "is not in the least decreased."

"Never mind; it is arranged. You love one another. My sister's happiness is secured. You are a gentleman, and her honour is safe in your hands; but I cannot evade my responsibility. To-night you are a prisoner; to-morrow I will shake you by the hand and look upon you as a brother."

Izard retreated with a cold bow and a formal good-night.

The door was locked, and Arthur, throwing himself upon the sofa so lately occupied by the object of his adoration, gave himself up to the most delightful reveries.

That he was a dupe he did not imagine; and he was far from suspecting that he was about to become a victim.

The next day he awoke from a brief slumber by the arrival of a substantial breakfast brought up on a tray by the duenna.

Two hours afterwards he was summoned to accompany Izard to the house of the British consul.

There he waited a few minutes for the arrival of Carmen; and when she came the Protestant minister read the marriage service.

Carmen and the Honourable Arthur Everton left the Consulate man and wife.

The gipsy girl had married the only son of the proud and haughty Lord Kimbolton.

Her ambition was gratified.

They returned to the house Izard had taken, and it is not too much to say that the bride and bridegroom were both happy.

As for Arthur Everton, he was transported with joy, and considered himself the luckiest man in the world.

Izard, in his assumed character of Mr. Caruthers, exclaimed:

"Bless you, my children!" and performed a favourite operation with him, that of wiping away an imaginary tear.

So the farce was played out.

But the tragedy was to follow.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Alas! the world is full of peril;
 The path that runs through the fairest meads,
 On the sunniest side of the valley, leads
 Into a region bleak and sterile!
 Alike in the high-born and the lowly,
 The will is feeble and passion strong.
 We cannot sever right from wrong!

Golden Legend.

A SHORT time after the romantic marriage we have just described the good ship "Marigold," Captain Griffiths, from Bristol, put into the port of Marseilles. The captain brought letters to Marshal Chabot, and at once proceeded to his house to deliver them.

Marshall had improved considerably in health, and had raised money to tide over his difficulties, which were not of so disastrous a nature as he had thought.

Captain Griffiths found the great ship-owner in his counting-house, but the latter at once took him home, and, ordering wine and spirits to be placed upon the table, prepared to talk to him in the drawing-room.

"Sit down, Griffiths," said Marshall, who knew the captain of the "Marigold" well. "Make yourself perfectly at home. I have received letters quite recently from my old friend Anglesey, and I am glad to say my health has improved."

"Heaven be thanked for that, sir," answered Griffiths, helping himself to some wine. "I have brought with me several boxes of specie, amounting in value to one million sterling."

"Ah!" cried Marshall, "Anglesey is a noble fellow, but I have done as much for him. Take the boxes to my bank and pay them in regularly to my account."

"It shall be done, sir. Mr. Anglesey was much alarmed to hear of your illness, which he imagined to be brought on by over anxiety. Of course he talks confidentially to me."

"And very properly too."

"Mr. Anglesey wishes you to return in the 'Marigold' and stay awhile in Bristol. The change, he thinks, will do you good," continued the captain.

"No. That is impossible at present. I must attend to my affairs, and I am really not well enough to travel," replied Marshall.

"At least you will allow Miss Mercedes to accompany me to England?"

"That is precisely my intention. Does Anglesey often talk of my daughter?"

"Often, sir. It is no secret that he wishes Mr. Ralph to marry her."

"I wish for nothing better," replied Marshall.

"What sort of a young man is Ralph turning out?"

"He is the handsomest and the best fellow in Bristol or out of it," answered Captain Griffiths. "He is as much at home on board a ship as he is in a counting-house."

"I expected as much when I advised Anglesey to adopt him. And how is our poor Marigold? Does she regard him as a son?"

"On the contrary, Mrs. Anglesey entertains a profound aversion for him," said Griffiths.

"Is her head any better?" inquired Marshall.

"Scarcely. She wanders about the neighbourhood and is very much attached to all the gipsies who come into the Clifton Woods."

"Ah! I perceive. She imagines that she will find her lost daughter among the gipsies," exclaimed Marshall.

"Quite so, sir; and the doctors still say that if she were to be satisfied that her daughter was restored to her she would recover her reason."

"Indeed. After all these years?"

"Yes," said Griffiths, "and for this reason. She is not actually mad, but simply a monomaniac, or mad upon one point. Remove the cause of this monomania and the disease ceases to exist."

Marshal Chabot shook his head gravely.

"When Lord Kimbolton caused that child to be stolen to revenge himself upon Anglesey," he exclaimed, "he took his measures so well that there is little chance of the girl being found, even if she is living."

"I fear that such is the case, sir," answered Griffiths.

"Mr. Anglesey loves his wife as much as ever, and though the hair of both of them is now tinged with gray, he would give all his fortune to see his darling Marigold in her proper senses again."

"I am sure he loves her. You do not know their sad history so well as I. Well, it is a peculiar world, full of changes and surprises. When do you return?"

"In three days, sir."

"By that time Mercedes shall be ready to accompany you; and tell Anglesey that it is my fondest wish that she should marry his adopted son Ralph. I am sorry I cannot go with you. Perhaps I shall be able to do so the next time you have occasion to visit the port of Marseilles. In the meantime assure my old friend of my continued friendship and my deep gratitude for his prompt kindness in my time of trouble. Leave me now. I will read my letters."

The captain withdrew.

Marshall's credit was saved by the princely sum lent him by Anglessey, and the distressing symptoms he had lately exhibited began to disappear as if by magic.

In a couple of hours' time Mercedes entered his study to ask him if he would soon be ready for dinner, and she was pleased to see a marked alteration in him for the better.

"Mercedes," he exclaimed, "I have good news for you. The 'Marigold' is in port. In three days she will leave for Bristol and you will sail in her."

"And you, papa?" said Mercedes.

"I cannot go at present; my affairs are a little disordered and require all my attention. I think I may promise to follow you shortly."

Mercedes looked disappointed.

"Remember, child, that you will be amongst kind friends," continued Marshall. "Anglessey will treat you as if you were his own daughter, and I may tell you a secret."

"What is that, papa?"

"I have promised your hand to Ralph, of whom you have heard me speak so often, as Anglessey's adopted son. The finest young man in Bristol, they tell me he is."

"Suppose I do not like him," said Mercedes, pouting her lip.

"If so, it will be a misfortune, for you will deal both my friend and myself a heavy blow. But you will like him. You must like him, if all accounts be true. However, in a few days you will have an opportunity of judging. Get ready for your voyage, and think over all the good fortune in store for you."

Mercedes was pleased at the idea of visiting England and seeing those friends of whom she had often heard her father speak, though she did not so warmly entertain the prospect of being disposed of in marriage to Ralph until she had seen him.

For three days she was busily occupied in preparing her wardrobe and packing up a variety of articles without which a young lady does not nowadays consider herself in a position to travel.

Izard had seen the "Marigold" in the dock, and heard that she was to leave for England shortly.

He was particularly anxious to get away from Marseilles, because he was in a state of deadly terror owing to his fear of Quirino.

To remain in Marseilles after his sister was married to Arthur Everton was in the first place to spend money unnecessarily, and secondly to run a risk.

Therefore he urged upon them the advisability of going to England.

Carmen was of his opinion.

She wanted to be introduced to her husband's friends, and to take her place in society as a lady of rank.

Every object she had in view in Marseilles had been achieved, therefore she cordially seconded Izard in his proposal to go to Bristol on board the "Marigold," which would be cheaper and more pleasant than a journey by rail.

Izard had spent a good deal of money, and he suggested that Arthur Everton should go to Marshall Chaut and ask him for a passage for himself and friends. He had privately ascertained that the vessel belonged to Marshall's intimate friend Anglessey, and besides the saving of money he had another reason.

Quirino would be sure to watch the railway station for their departure, while he would not think of looking after the shipping.

In so slight a matter Carmen yielded to Izard, and Arthur Everton did not think of interfering with either of them.

The number of passengers carried by the "Marigold" was limited to half a dozen.

Izard went to Captain Griffiths and engaged berths for three, not knowing that Mercedes was to be their fellow-passenger.

If Carmen had been aware of this fact she would have refused to sail in the same ship with Mercedes, of whom she was unconsciously jealous.

The "Marigold" was to sail at twelve o'clock precisely, and Izard began to think when the morning of the day of departure dawned that he had outwitted the dreaded Quirino.

The latter, however, worked like a mole in the dark, and was not so blind as the gipsy imagined.

It was arranged that Izard and Arthur Everton should go down to the quay with the luggage half an hour before Carmen, who was to follow in a separate carriage.

Izard and his brother-in-law got into the hired fly, and were driven rapidly away.

"The horse has run away," said Arthur.

"No, no," replied Izard, "I told the driver to go quickly, and he is merely obeying my orders. No danger."

He added to himself:

"No one can see us if we go at this pace, and in a

quarter of an hour I shall have no farther fear of Quirino."

Nevertheless the horse redoubled his speed, clouds of dust arose on all sides, and the hoarse cries of people denoted that the animal had taken the bit between his teeth and was unmanageable.

Izard did not realize the truth for some time, and it was not until he saw that the driver had left the town behind and got into the open country that he became alarmed.

"The scoundrel!" he said. "He has let the horse run away with him."

"I told you so," replied Arthur. "But you would not believe me. Never mind, the beast will be exhausted soon and then we can turn back."

"The time, think of the time lost," cried Izard, in an agony of apprehension. "If we are late the 'Marigold' will sail without us, she must go at the time appointed."

"No matter," said Arthur; "we must go by rail. I don't suppose my dear Carmen will sail without me. That would make me inconsolable. If we do not come they will put her on shore; so let us make the best of the situation."

Izard groaned in anguish of spirit:

"Quirino will find us. My presentiments never deceived me, and I fear there is more than mere chance in this seeming accident," he muttered.

In vain Izard urged the driver to stop his horse.

The man declared he was unable to do so, and, overwhelmed with execrations, he entered a road leading into a sombre-looking wood, which was a place of bad repute and infested with footpads and evil characters.

They had not proceeded far before a man placed himself suddenly in the centre of the road.

Izard became deadly pale.

"We are lost!" cried Izard, who exhibited the most abject terror.

"Why so?" demanded Arthur, who did not see any cause for fear.

"It is he. It is Quirino."

Arthur Everton heard this name pronounced for the first time, and it did not convey any particular meaning to him.

"Tell me," he said, "who this Quirino is, and why we should be in danger through meeting him."

Izard had not time to answer, for the driver pulled up his horse with difficulty, and stopped the carriage close to the young fisherman, who had emerged from the wood like a spirit of olden time.

It was evident to Izard's mind that the running away of the horse was a prearranged affair, and that the driver was in the pay of Quirino, who had been successfully watching the adventurers while they thought they had escaped his notice.

Quirino's face evinced an expression of indomitable hatred which was almost diabolical in its ferocious intensity.

Arthur Everton saw the driver descend from his box and stand by the horses' heads, while Quirino approached the carriage.

"Is the fellow mad, or have we fallen into the hands of a robber?" said Arthur, who was very angry.

"Get out," was the only answer Quirino condescended to make.

The Honourable Arthur Everton's patrician pride revolted at being spoken to in this way.

"To whom are you talking, my good fellow?" he cried, in French, which was the language employed by the young fisherman.

"To you," was the reply, "and your companion."

"Who are you?" queried Arthur.

"Ask the man by your side. He will tell you. I am Quirino."

"That mysterious name again," said Arthur. "Well, whoever you are, what do you want?"

"Amongst other things I want to kill you," replied Quirino, savagely.

Arthur sprang lightly from the carriage and said, laughingly:

"Certainly you have most amiable intentions, and I ought to be obliged to you for the frankness with which you express them. As I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance will you kindly inform me why you wish to kill me, and explain in what way my death would be either agreeable or useful to you?"

Instead of replying Quirino sprang upon the step of the carriage, and, seizing Izard by the throat, dragged him down into the dust, where he left him on his knees, half dead with apprehension.

"Ask this man," he said; "he will tell you."

Then, throwing a purse containing some gold pieces to the driver of the carriage, he exclaimed:

"We don't want you any longer—you can go."

The driver pocketed the purse and thanked the donor, in whose pay he clearly was.

Whipping up his horse, he drove away, but halted about fifty yards off, where he was hidden from view by a turn in the road, and, drawing his vehicle upon

one side, he allowed his horse to crop the grass under the trees, while he crept cautiously up to the three people he had left, to hear what they said and watch them.

Arthur Everton had turned to Izard and said, in a puzzled tone:

"My dear brother-in-law, Mr. Quirino has referred me to you for the cause of the hatred which he says he entertains towards me. This appears strange, but, if you can, I beg that you will gratify my curiosity."

Izard was too much alarmed to be able to utter a word.

Kicking him in the side, Quirino said:

"The coward cannot speak."

Again the blood came to Arthur's face. He did not like to see a relation of his treated in this shameful manner.

"Look here, my good fellow," he said; "I have been very easy with you hitherto, though you may go a little too far. Don't insult this gentleman again. He is a relation of mine. If you do I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of knocking you down."

"Do you call him a gentleman?" replied Quirino, in a tone of intense scorn, while he pointed to the writing form at his feet.

"I have every reason to believe that he is one."

"The impudent thief," continued Quirino, "has imposed upon you. He pretends to be an English gentleman, wealthy and well connected, when he is simply a poor gipsy, obliged to fly from England to escape the consequences of some robbery."

"What do you say?" cried Arthur Everton, aghast.

"It is only a few weeks ago that he and his sister lodged in my house in the fisherman's quarter of Marseilles. They used to go about in the streets, dance, sing, and play to gain a few halfpence."

"It is impossible," replied Arthur; "you are guilty of a falsehood. Mr. Caruthers is a gentleman. His sister, formerly Miss Carmen Caruthers, is my wife, and you are uttering an odious calumny against respectable people; for what reason I know not."

While he spoke he recalled the incidents of the night in the gambling-house.

He saw again the long hair, the expressive eyes, and the pretty face of the dancing girl. He saw once more the eager, avaricious features of the man who accompanied her.

A terrible fear that he had been deceived took possession of him.

"Can this be true?" he murmured.

Quirino bent over Izard with a long, sharp, glittering knife.

"Confess," he said. "Confess, or I will end your life this moment."

"What do you want me to confess?" asked Izard, whose teeth chattered so much that he could scarcely articulate.

"The truth. Make haste, or you have not long to live."

"Oh, yes," cried Izard as he felt the point of the knife entering his flesh. "I will confess. What Quirino says is true. My sister and I lived in his house. We were beggars, singers, dancers—anything. Carmen and I are gipsies. We have laid a trap for Mr. Everton, and Carmen has caught him."

"You hear!" exclaimed Quirino, addressing Arthur.

"Mr. Quirino, or whatever your name may be," replied Arthur, who was pale and red by turns, "I have to thank you for opening my eyes. That I have been made the dupe of these infamous people there can be no doubt, and they owe me a heavy reckoning, which I will make them pay. Still, all that does not explain the hatred you say you entertain for me."

"I wish for your death because Carmen was engaged to me," answered Quirino, with a hard, metallic laugh. "I wish for your death because when Carmen broke her word with me I swore that she should never be the bride of another. I am a Spaniard, sir, and I never break my word. I have killed my man before now, and I shall have little compunction in killing you, for I regard you as justly my victim."

"Very well," said Arthur Everton, with a well-bred smile. "I now understand your motive, but as I am quite unarmed you will have to assassinate me."

"No," replied Quirino; "I have a brace of pistols, and I will give you a chance. We will fight a duel—you shall have fair play."

"A duel," said Arthur; "that is better. I fought one with swords in the south of France a little while ago, and I have no objection to pistols. This will be amusing. I have to thank you for an original idea. This affair will make a good story to tell at mess when I rejoin my ship."

Quirino shook his head as if he did not think much of the Honourable Arthur Everton's prospect of ever escaping from the fate he intended for him.

"Where shall our duel take place?" continued Arthur.

"Within these trees there is an open glade," re-

plied Quirino. "But first of all I must attend to this scoundrel."

He seized Izard as he spoke, and bound his limbs with some stout cord; then he cast him like a bundle of rags into some bushes by the road side.

"Lie there, dog," he exclaimed, "till I have time to talk to you."

The gipsy did not utter a word. He appeared to be already dead, so silent and motionless was he.

Quirino led the way into the enclosure, which was only separated from the road by some brushwood and a few trees.

"I will go to the right. You remain here on this side," exclaimed Quirino.

"What then?" asked Arthur Everton.

"You have a watch. Compare the time with mine."

They did so, and there was not any difference between the two.

"It is now ten minutes to twelve," continued Quirino. "We will take one minute to hide ourselves in this brushwood. When it wants nine minutes to twelve I shall be at liberty to shoot you like a hare if I can see you, and I shall expect no better fate from you."

"That is a curious arrangement," answered Arthur. "Never mind; get to your cover and I will do my best to pick you off, though I must confess you are an original genius."

They turned back to back, and each sought a shelter.

Izard overheard this conversation and could even see the opponents. He became more frightened than ever and muttered:

"Everton will take this chance of escaping, and I shall be left alone to the hatred of Quirino. Oh! Carmen! unlucky Carmen! why did I listen to your ambitious dream, which has brought me to this pass? I wish you could see what you have done for your miserable brother!"

Arthur Everton, however, had no idea of escaping. He had said that he would fight the young fisherman with pistols, and after accepting his strange challenge he only thought of the best way of outwitting his determined enemy.

Rapidly seeking some brushwood which was thick and impenetrable to the eye, he sank down, and, looking at his watch, waited.

The minute passed. Then he heard the click of the lock as Quirino cocked his pistol.

Neither of them moved for some time after this, and the Englishman experienced a feeling that had never come over him before. It was not fear exactly, but he wondered if he were going to die. Death was so near him that he could almost look him in the face. At any moment his enemy might creep round through the brushwood and shoot him through the heart. And all for Carmen!—the false lady, the pretended Miss Caruthers. His love for her seemed to ooze away as rapidly as it had grown.

He had given his aristocratic name to a creature of low extraction, the sister of a base villain who gained his living by begging or thieving in the streets.

His head sank upon his breast as he thought of this, and even Carmen's pretended love and her actual beauty did not reconcile him to his position.

He thought of how he had been deceived. The tears of shame and remorse came into his eyes, and he forgot that Quirino, the former lover of his unworthy wife, was waiting within a few yards of him with a loaded pistol, and thirsting for his life.

(To be continued.)

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

It was high noon of the next day when Baron Chandos opened his eyes. He had not left his chair. The servants of the chateau were pounding upon the door outside in a frantic manner. He had slept all that time.

He sat up, rubbing his eyes, not yet awake, yet smitten as it were with fear instantly.

He staggered to his feet.

There was a slip of paper pinned to the breast of his coat; he took it and read as follows:

"When you read this Sybil will be free. Don't regret, dear friend, that I have outwitted you in this business. I believe, before Heaven, it is best that I should."

Baron Chandos read with whitening lips. A groan of anguish and horror burst from him.

"He has gone," he cried, "gone to his death!"

He looked for the pistols. His dream had been true. They had been taken from him. He must have dreamed the struggle entirely. There could have been nothing of that, for he had evidently not left his chair till now.

All this time the servants were pounding upon the

door, and shouting to him like people who had lost their senses.

He went at last and opened the door.

All the servants in the chateau seemed to have gathered there. They became silent at sight of him.

Sybil had gone away with her maid and one trunk hours before.

Then, after a time, the servant who had answered Baron Chandos's summons the night before had in his uneasiness divulged what the baron had told him, and they had come at once in a body here.

In a few words the baron explained. Heath had guessed that something was in the wine and had artfully contrived to change the glasses.

The baron had got the sleeping-draught instead of the one for whom it was intended, and while he was under its influence that other had vanished.

The servants knew by this time why Baron Chandos had been on guard over their master.

How Heath had got away was the next question. Both doors were fast.

Baron Chandos thought of his dream. He rushed to the open window.

It looked upon the garden.

A thicket of late roses was directly beneath.

The distance was a dizzy one, though there was no stone pavement to fall upon here as on the other side.

The impression—whether he had dreamed it or not—was strong in the baron's mind that Volney had leaped from that window, either meaning to kill himself, or else not knowing what he was really doing.

Besides, how else could he have got out? Both doors of the room were bolted on the inside.

From where he was Baron Chandos could not tell whether there were any signs of disturbance in the garden below.

He went instantly, however, and examined the spot with the servants.

The ground was much trampled and the bushes broken.

That was all; not even a shred clung to the thorns of the rose bushes to show what had broken them. The gardener being summoned knew nothing about it.

If Volney had leaped from the window down here he could scarcely have missed serious injury to life or limb. It was next to impossible but that the fall must have killed him.

On the other hand, there was the bare chance that he might not even have hurt himself seriously.

Drunken men sometimes fell from great heights and were uninjured. The same might happen to an insane man for aught the baron knew.

But was Heath insane?

Again, if even he had gone away from here unharmed, was there any probability that he was still alive?

He had taken the pistols away with him, and remembering that look in his eyes, the baron could not doubt that he meant to use them.

Baron Chandos questioned the servants. No one had heard a pistol-shot that morning. He ordered the grounds to be carefully examined; he went over a large portion of them himself; then the neighbourhood was scoured.

In the midst came a strange man, riding furiously, and he demanded to see Baron Chandos immediately.

The baron came forward, exchanged a word with him, and then, with a very scared face, almost dragged him inside the chateau in his haste.

They went into a room by themselves, and talked for a long time, with the door locked between them and the curious, gaping servants, who were eager to know what had happened.

The stranger had evidently ridden far and fast; his horse was covered with mud, and his bridle reins with foam. The poor horse seemed ready to drop with weariness.

No one knew the man, or the strange uniform he wore—if it was a uniform.

Certainly nothing like it had any of them ever seen before anywhere—it was a long black garment of serge, shaped something like a priest's, and a cap made of black and white stripes. The cap had a deep border of velvet, and the serge garment had a similar one all round it.

Some of the servants pretended to have seen a curious belt under the outer garment as it had fallen open when the man flung himself off his horse, and they fancied his belt had glittering letters upon it, which they did not have time to read.

However whether all this was servants' gossip or truth, it was a long time before the stranger and Baron Chandos came forth from the room in which they had been closeted.

The baron seemed to have grown ten years older in that time.

The two mounted, the baron his own horse, the stranger a fresh one, and rode away to the nearest town, without a word to the eager servants. They

went first to a magistrate—it was afterwards discovered—and then galloped away at a furious pace, no one could tell whither.

The baron returned alone, after three days, paid the servants and dismissed all save an old man and his wife, whom he put in charge of the chateau for the present.

Sybil had left all her trunks behind her but one. In the bitterness and excitement of her soul she would not take anything her husband had given her. Baron Chandos had these all corded and taken to the nearest station preparatory to their departure for Graystone. He meant to go himself by the same train that took them, but he had something to do first.

He waited for Lord Dane's arrival, which he had reason to believe he might still expect.

Why he had not come before he was at a loss to conjecture.

But the delay was all a contrivance of Cheeny, Dane's confidential man.

That worthy had taken his master by a most needlessly tedious route into Normandy, and they only made their appearance at the chateau just as Baron Chandos was concluding he had been wrongly informed as to their having departed from Paris.

The baron had his own reasons for not wishing Dane to ask questions of any but him. What those reasons were may appear later.

Lord Dane knew Baron Chandos slightly. His amazement at seeing him there in the chateau was very evident.

Chandos smiled faintly. It was to be a long while before the baron laughed in a natural manner again. He had that locked in his breast which forbade much smiling.

"I can guess what you are here for, Lord Dane," he said, in a grave tone.

"You? I doubt it, baron."

"Shall I tell you? You are looking for"—the baron paused and compressed his lips—"for Mr. Heath!"

Lord Dane stared.

"How did you know?"

"I knew, that is enough," said the baron, coldly; "I came here on a similar errand to yours—similar in one respect that is—I believed him to be a murderer. He has escaped us both, however," he added, and the earl started violently at the words.

"Gone?"

Then he turned angrily on his man Cheeny, who was with him.

"This is your fault," he said, in sharp tones. "I believe you wanted me to miss him again."

The earl believed nothing of the kind. He spoke only in the irritation of the moment. But Cheeny, whose guilty conscience made him sensitive, grew painfully red at the accusation. To add to his confusion, the black, penetrating eyes of Baron Chandos were turned upon his conscious face with keen and observing curiosity.

"I will follow him to the ends of the earth," cried Lord Dane, furiously, "that I may put him face to face with his crimes."

"You might have to follow him even farther than that," suggested the baron, in a strange, measured voice.

The earl was struck by the tone more than the words.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"I mean that it is suspected he has destroyed himself."

Lord Dane's ruby colour faded suddenly. He had not once thought of anything like this. He had come to threaten him with an arrest for murder if he did not come to terms.

Those terms the readers already know. Volney was to confess everything to his wife and then leave her. That was to be his only alternative. In his black anger at Volney, in his passionate longing for the woman he believed Sybil to be, Lord Dane had looked farther, perhaps, than even these results. But he had truly not meant death. Arrest, ignominy, the loss of the woman whose father he believed he had slain—all these perhaps, but not what had happened. But had it happened? He turned to the baron again.

"Mr. Heath's wife," resumed the baron, "quitted here several days ago. She went away with only her maid for a companion. Mr. Heath disappeared the night before her departure, under circumstances which render it very probable that he meant to take his own life."

"What were those circumstances, baron?" Lord Dane asked.

"This was one," Baron Chandos said, solemnly, taking out of his pocket-book a folded scrap of paper. "I was at the chateau. Heath, I know, had an explanation with his wife that night. He knew he was going to be arrested for the murder. He knew you were coming, but I believe he had made up his mind

to confess everything to her before he heard that. He was too miserable to endure it longer. I believe, if he had known it would make his wife hate him, he would have told her; and yet when he did tell her, and she refused to forgive him, it drove him to the madness of seeking to destroy his own life."

Baron Chandos paused and moistened his dry lips. Lord Dane did not utter a word. He looked terribly agitated. His breath came short and quick. He waited for the baron to continue his recital.

"He told his wife all," Chandos resumed. "What that 'all' was you may imagine you know, but you are mistaken. Volney Heath never killed Vassar; but his wife believes that he did, and in that belief she would never have willingly seen him or spoken to him again. She will never have the chance now."

Baron Chandos paused again. A sound like some one gasping for breath had caused him to look at Lord Dane's confidential man once more.

That individual, from being red as a carnation, had changed to a livid whiteness, and his eyes seemed starting from his head.

Baron Chandos looked at him in puzzled inquiry a moment.

Then Lord Dane spoke to him.

"You had something there you were about to show me," he said, alluding to the paper the baron still held.

"Yes; I suspected—I was afraid of something of the kind when I saw Heath after he came from his wife. Such despair I hope never to behold again. I was moved by the sight of it to go myself and try to soften his wife towards him. I took his pistols with me—I dared not leave him alone with them—and went. I might as well have gone to a beautiful statue. The woman poor Heath lost his soul for is as heartless as she is beautiful. I returned to him. I found him more like a madman than ever. I got a sleeping potion, thinking to quiet him in that way. But he tricked me into taking it instead of him—contrived to change the glasses as we were taking wine together. He must have seen me put the potion in his cup. I meant to stay and watch him, but I stayed and slept instead; and when I woke at noon the next day he had taken his pistols from me and had gone, leaving this behind him pinned to the breast of my coat."

Lord Dane took the scrap of paper in his own hand. He read it through slowly, his hands shaking. Then he gave it back to the baron.

"He deserved her after all," he said, in a low, awe-struck voice. "I thought I loved her and hated him, but I swear to you, baron, if it would bring him back to life I'd give all that is mine to see it."

A strange, excited expression came over Baron Chandos's face.

"You can't do that," he said, "but there is something else you can do, if you mean what you have just said. You can use your vast resources, your powerful influence, to sift that matter of the murder to the bottom. He resigned her to you that night. In his deep self-abasement and despair he said that you and she would marry in the end. Vindicate him to her first, as you alone can do. You were a sharer in such guilt as his was. You helped on the deceit that at last wrecked him. She would have forgiven him the rest, I believe, if she could have thought him innocent of her father's death. Establish that innocence to her and the world before you breathe one word of love in the ears of Sybil Heath."

"I will do it," Lord Dane responded, solemnly. "Wherever the murderer of Rupert Vassar hides he shall be found and dragged into the light of day, if it be in the power of human agency to accomplish it."

Baron Chandos and he clasped hands upon it, and the baron's glance rested upon him with a curiously admiring and surprised expression.

"There is more, Dane, in you than I thought," he said.

Cheeny had turned his back upon them. His face was dark, and convulsed with hate and terror. He almost gnashed his teeth as he muttered:

"I must work faster—faster. I must paralyze him quickly, or he will destroy me. Once master of the true countess and I shall be comparatively safe."

We left Perdita standing horror-stricken over a dying woman, about whose couch, spread upon the floor, the carpet was soaked with blood.

The woman's lips moved. Perdita put her ear to them, seeing that she could not speak loud.

"Close the blinds, so that the light will not shine through. He might come back and kill you too."

Perdita obeyed her with a chill shiver, and knelt by her head. The lips moved again. The great eyes fastened upon Perdita's almost threateningly.

"I am bleeding to death," she said, in a hollow, awful whisper. "A vein has been opened in my arm. I want you to know, I want the world to know, and him to be hung for it."

Perdita was not one to stand stupefied and struck nerveless even by such words, and in the presence of such horror as this. Her wits were of the ready sort. Before the woman had done speaking she had found where the fatal incision was, and knotted her own handkerchief about the arm between the cut and the shoulder. She had once seen a surgeon do a similar thing and had remembered it. She glanced about her for something to make a sort of tourniquet with and desisted a gentleman's walking-stick on the floor. The little boy brought it to her, and she inserted it in the knot she had made, twisting it round afterwards till the thus tightened bandage caused the drip of the blood to cease.

The woman let her do it, but her terrible looks never softened.

"It may prolong life so that I can give my vengeance and my child into your charge, but it cannot save my life. I am doomed," she said; "I have lost too much blood to live."

Perdita could but strongly fear it was so, certainly unless a surgeon could be brought at once.

She proposed to the woman that she should take the horse and go for a doctor, she could show the child how to keep the bandage tight; but the woman, without moving those deadly, angry eyes from her face, said, still in that hollow whisper:

"If you leave me and I die while you are gone, I'll come out of my grave to haunt you, if dead folks can come back."

Perdita could not help shivering slightly at the chilly threat, but she spoke bravely.

"I don't think they can myself. But I won't leave you without your consent. Don't you think I could place you more comfortably?"

"No, let me alone, I can feel the life go from me drop by drop. It was my husband did this. He drugged me, and opened the vein, then he went and nailed up the windows and doors. By the time I knew what was the matter with me I was too weak to help myself. Georgie ran away and hid, or he would have killed him too, and he his own child."

Perdita glanced at the child, whose bold, bright eyes dilated in a sort of stare of terror, and his pretty cheeks were white.

"Papa frightened Georgie, Georgie ran away," he said, in a strange, shrill voice.

"It is true," the woman said. "He was frightened, and he climbed up there and hid."

She pointed to a bed with a high, square canopy above it, and instantly Georgie ran like a little squirrel and mounted the carved and twisted post, and crept in among the scarlet festoons at the top, where he was hidden like a bird in its nest.

The woman just glanced at him.

"It's an awful thing to have nothing to leave my boy but his father's guilt, but I want his father hung for this. I hope you'll see it done. Write me out something and let me sign it, Georgie will know him. His name is Carew. Keep Georgie, that through his aid you may identify him. Georgie—"

The last words were impossible to be understood, the woman was dying while she said them—died with them on her lips as it were.

Even after the lips were still and rigid the eyes retained that threatening stare that made Perdita shudder from head to foot to look at them.

At first Perdita tried restoratives, thinking she had only fainted, but it was evident very soon that the woman was quite dead.

It was a frightful position for a young girl to be placed in, alone with a dead woman, in this far-away, strange house. Added to that, the woman had undoubtedly been murdered, and it can perhaps be imagined that Perdita was a girl of uncommon resolution to bear herself as she did.

(To be continued.)

ROBERT RUSHTON'S DESTINY.

CHAPTER XX.

If Robert was surprised at this unexpected rencontre with the miser's nephew, Ben Haley had even more reason for astonishment. He had supposed his young enemy, as he chose to consider him, quietly living at home in the small village of Millbury. He was far from expecting to see him on shipboard bound to India.

There was one difference, however, between the surprise felt by the two.

Robert was disagreeably surprised, but a flash of satisfaction lit up the face of the mate as he realized that the boy who had wounded him was on board the same ship as himself, and consequently, as he supposed, in his power.

"How came you here?" he exclaimed, hastily advancing towards Robert.

Resenting the tone of authority in which these words were spoken, Robert answered, composedly:

"I walked on board."

"You'd better not be impudent, young one," said Ben, roughly.

"When you tell me what right you have to question me in that style," said Robert, coldly, "I will apologize."

"I am the mate of this vessel, as you will soon find out."

"So I supposed," said Robert.

"You, I suppose, are the cabin-boy. Change your clothes at once, and report for duty."

Robert felt sincerely thankful at that moment that he was not the cabin-boy, for he foresaw that if such were the case he would be subjected to brutal treatment from the mate—treatment which his subordinate position would make him powerless to resent. Now, as a passenger, he felt independent, and though it was disagreeable to have the mate for an enemy he did not feel afraid.

"You've made a mistake, Mr. Haley," said our hero. "I am not the cabin-boy."

"What are you then?"

"I'm a passenger."

"You are telling a falsehood. We don't take passengers," said Ben Haley, determined not to believe that the boy was out of his power.

"If you will consult the captain you may learn your mistake," said Robert.

Ben Haley couldn't help crediting his statement, since it would have done Robert no good to misrepresent the facts of the case.

He resolved, however, to ask the captain about it, and inquire how it happened that he had been received as a passenger, contrary to the usual custom.

"You will hear from me again," he said, in a tone of menace.

Robert turned away indifferently, so far as appearance went, but he couldn't help feeling a degree of apprehension as he thought of the long voyage he was to take in company with his enemy, who doubtless would have it in his power to annoy him, even if he abstained from positive injury.

"He is a bad man and will injure me if he can," he reflected; "but I think I can take care of myself. If I can't I will appeal to the captain."

Meanwhile the mate went up to the captain.

"Captain Eldon," said he, "is that boy a passenger?"

"Yes, Mr. Haley."

"It is something unusual to take passengers, is it not?"

"Yes, but this lad is a friend of the owner; and Mr. Morgan has given me directions to treat him with particular consideration."

Ben Haley was puzzled.

How did it happen that Mr. Morgan, a merchant prince, had become interested in an obscure country boy?

"I don't understand it," he said, perplexed.

"I suppose the boy is a relation of Mr. Morgan," suggested the captain.

"Nothing of the kind. He is of poor family, from a small country town."

"Then you know him?"

"I know something of him and his family. He is one of the most impudent young rascals I ever met."

"Indeed!" returned the captain, surprised. "From what I have seen of him I have come to quite a different conclusion. He has been very gentlemanly and polite to me."

"He can appear so, but you will find out his real nature sooner or later. He has not the slightest regard for truth, and will tell the most unblushing falsehoods with the coolest and most matter-of-fact air."

"I shouldn't have supposed it," said Captain Eldon, looking over to our hero, who was at the other extremity of the deck. "Appearances are deceitful, certainly."

"They are in this case."

This terminated the colloquy for the time. The mate had done what he could to prejudice the captain against the boy he hated.

But he was not, however, entirely successful. Captain Eldon had a mind of his own, and did not choose to adopt any man's judgment or prejudices blindly. He resolved to watch Robert a little more closely than he had done, in order to see whether his own observation confirmed the opinion expressed by the mate.

Of the latter he did not know much, since this was the first voyage on which they had sailed together; but Captain Eldon was obliged to confess that he did not wholly like his first officer. He appeared to be a capable seaman, and doubtless understood his duties, but there was a bold and reckless expression in his face which impressed him unfavourably.

Ben Haley, on his part, had learned something, but not much. He had ascertained that Robert was a protégé of the owner of the vessel, and had been re-

commended to the special care of the captain; but what could be his object in undertaking the present voyage he did not understand. He was a little afraid that Robert would divulge the not very creditable part he had played at Millbury; and that he might not be believed in that case he had represented him to the captain as untruthful.

After some consideration he decided to change his tactics and induce our hero to believe he was his friend, or at least not hostile to him.

To this he was impelled by two motives. First to secure his silence respecting the robbery, and next to so far get into his confidence as to draw out of him the object of his present expedition. Thus he would lull his suspicions to sleep, and might hereafter gratify his malice the more securely.

He accordingly approached our hero and tapped him on the shoulder.

Robert drew away slightly. Haley saw the movement, and hated the boy the more for it.

"Well, my lad," he said, "I find your story is correct."

"Those who know me don't generally doubt my word," said Robert, coldly.

"Well, I don't know you, or at least not intimately," said Haley, "and you must confess that I haven't the best reason to like you."

"Did you suffer much inconvenience from your wound?" asked Robert.

"Not much. It proved to be slight. You were a bold boy to wing me. I could have crushed you easily."

"I suppose you could, but you know how I was situated. I couldn't run away and desert your uncle. I don't know about that. You don't understand that little affair. I suppose you think I had no right to the gold I took."

"I certainly did think so."

"Then you are mistaken. My uncle got his money from my grandfather. A part should have gone to my mother, and consequently to me, but he didn't choose to act honestly. My object in calling upon him was to induce him to do me justice at last. But you know the old man has become a miser, and makes money his idol. The long and short of it was that, as he wouldn't listen to reason, I determined to take the law into my own hands, and carry off what I thought ought to come to me."

Robert listened to this explanation without putting much faith in it. It was not at all in accordance with the story told by Mr. Nichols, and he knew, moreover, that the man before him had passed a wild and dissolute youth.

"I suppose what I did was not strictly legal," continued Ben Haley, lightly; "but we sailors are not much versed in the quips of the law. To my thinking law defeats justice about as often as it aids it."

"I don't know very much about law," said Robert, perceiving that some reply was expected.

"That's just my case," said Ben, "and the less I have to do with it the better it will suit me. I suppose my uncle made a great fuss about the money I carried off."

"Yes," said Robert. "It was quite a blow to him, and he has been in a state of nervous excitement ever since for fear you would come back again."

Ben Haley shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"He needsn't be afraid. I don't want to trouble him, but I was bound he shouldn't keep from me what was rightly my due. I haven't got all I ought to have, but I am not a lover of money, and I shall let it go."

"I hope you won't go near him again, for he got a severe shock the last time."

"When you get back, if you get a chance to see him privately, you may tell him there is no danger of that."

"I shall be glad to do so," said Robert.

"I thought I would explain the matter to you," continued the mate, in an off-hand manner, "for I didn't want you to remain under a false impression. So you are going to see a little of the world?"

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose that is your only object?"

"No. I have another in view."

The mate waited to learn what this object was, but Robert stopped, and did not seem inclined to go on.

"Well," said Haley, after a slight pause, "as we are to be together on a long voyage, we may as well be friends. Here's my hand."

To his surprise Robert made no motion to take it. "Mr. Haley," said he, "I don't like to refuse your hand, but when I tell you that I am the son of Captain Rushton, of the ship 'Norman,' you will understand why I cannot accept your hand."

Ben Haley started back in dismay. How could Robert have learned anything of his treachery to his father? Had the dead come back from the bottom of the sea to expose him? Was Captain Rushton still

alive? He did not venture to ask, but he felt his hatred for Robert growing more intense.

"Boy," he said, in a tone of concentrated passion, "you have done a bold thing in rejecting my hand. I might have been your friend. Think of me henceforth as your relentless enemy."

He walked away, his face dark with the evil passions which Robert's slight had aroused in his breast.

CHAPTER XXI.

We must now go back nearly two years.

Five men were floating about in a boat in the Southern Ocean. They looked gaunt and famished. For a week they had lived on short allowance, and now for two days they had been entirely without food.

There was in their faces that look, well nigh hopeless, which their perilous situation naturally produced. For one day also they had been without water, and the torments of thirst were worse than the cravings of hunger.

These men were Captain Rushton and four sailors of the ship "Norman," whose burning has already been alluded to.

One of the sailors, Bunsby, was better educated and more intelligent than the rest, and the captain spoke to him as a friend and an equal, for all the distinctions of rank were broken down by the immediate prospect of a terrible death.

"How is all this going to end, Bunsby?" said the captain, in a low voice, turning from a vain endeavour to discern some sail, and addressing his subordinate. "I am afraid there is only one way," answered Bunsby. "There is not much prospect of our meeting a ship."

"If we do it is doubtful if we can attract any one's attention."

"I should like the chance to try."

"I never knew before how much worse thirst is than hunger."

"Do you know, captain, if this should last much longer I shall be tempted to swallow some of this sea-water."

"It will only make matters worse."

"I know it, but at least it will moisten my throat."

The other sailors sat stupid and silent, apparently incapable of motion.

"I wish I had a ping of tobacco," said one, at last.

"If there were any use in wishing I'd wish myself on shore," said the second.

"We'll never see land again," said the third, gloomily. "We're bound for Davy Jones's locker."

"I'd like to see my old mother before I go down," said the first.

"I've got a mother too," said the third. "If I could only have a drop of the warm tea such as she used to make. She's sitting down to dinner now, most likely, little thinking that her Jack is dying of hunger out here."

There was a pause, and the captain spoke again.

"I wish I knew whether that bottle will ever reach shore. When was it we launched it?"

"Four days since."

"I have something here I wish my wife could get."

He drew from his pocket-book a small, folded paper.

"What is that, captain?" asked Bunsby.

"It is my wife's fortune."

"How is that, captain?"

"That paper is good for two thousand pounds."

"Two thousand pounds wouldn't do us much good here. They wouldn't buy a pound of bread or a pint of water."

"No, but they would—I hope they will—save my wife and son from suffering. Just before I sailed on this voyage I took two thousand pounds—nearly all my savings—to a man in our village to keep till I returned, or, if I did not return, to keep in trust for my wife and child. This is the paper he gave me in acknowledgment."

"Is he a man you can trust, captain?"

"I think so. He is the manager of the factory in our village—a rich man, or at any rate, well to do. He has a good reputation for integrity."

"Did your wife know you had left the money in his hands?"

"No! I meant it as a surprise to her."

"It is a pity you did not leave that paper in her hands."

"What do you mean, Bunsby?" said the captain, anxiously. "You don't think this man will betray his trust?"

"I can't say, captain, for I don't know him; but I don't like to trust any man too far."

Captain Rushton was silent for a moment.

There was a look of trouble on his face.

"You make me feel anxious, Bunsby. It is hard enough to feel that I shall probably never again see my wife and child—on earth I mean—but to think

that they may possibly suffer want makes it more bitter."

"He may be honest, captain. Don't trouble yourself too much."

"I see that I made a mistake. I should have left this paper with my wife. Davis can keep this money, and no one will be the wiser. It is a terrible temptation."

"Particularly if he is pressed for money."

"I don't think that. He is considered a rich man. He ought to be, and my money would be only a trifle to him."

"Let us hope it is so, captain," said Bunsby, who felt that further discussion would do no good, and only embitter the last moments of his commander.

But anxiety did not so readily leave the captain. Added to the pangs of hunger and the cravings of thirst was the haunting fear that by his imprudence his wife and child would suffer.

"Do you think it would do any good, Bunsby," he said, after a pause, "to put this receipt in a bottle, as I did the letter?"

"No, captain, it is too great a risk. There is not more than one chance in a hundred of its reaching its destination. Besides, suppose you should be picked up, and go home without the receipt; he might refuse to pay you."

"He would do so at the peril of his life, then," said the captain, fiercely. "Do you think, if I were alive, I would let any man rob me of the savings of my life?"

"Such things have occurred, captain."

"It would not be safe to try it on me. Bunsby!"

"Well, captain?"

"It is possible that I may perish, but you may be saved."

"There is not much chance of it."

"Yet it is possible. Now, if that should happen, I have a favour to ask of you."

"Name it, captain."

"I want you, if I die first, to take this paper, and guard it carefully; and, if you live to get back, to take it to Millbury and see that justice is done to my wife and child."

"I promise that, captain; but I think we shall die together."

"Twenty-four hours passed."

The little boat still rocked hither and thither on the ocean billows.

The five faces looked more haggard, and there was a wild, eager look upon them as they scanned the horizon, hoping to see a ship. Their lips and throats were dry and parched.

"I can't stand it any longer," said one—it was the sailor called Jack—"I shall drink some of the sea-water."

"Don't do it, Jack," said Bunsby. "You'll suffer more than ever."

"I must," said Jack, desperately; and, scooping up some water in the hollow of his hand, he drank it eagerly.

Again and again he drank with feverish eager-ness.

"How is it?" said the second sailor.

"I feel better," said Jack; "my throat was so dry."

"Then I'll take some too."

The other two sailors, unheeding the remonstrances of Bunsby and the captain, followed the example of Jack.

They felt relief for the moment, but soon their torments became unendurable. With parched throats, gasping for breath, they lay back in agony.

Suffering intensely themselves, Captain Rushton and Bunsby regarded with pity the agonies of their unfortunate companions.

"This is horrible," said the captain.

"Yes," said Bunsby, sadly. "I can't last much longer now."

His words were truer than he thought. Unable to endure his torture, the sailor named Jack suddenly staggered to his feet.

"I can't stand it any longer," he said, wildly; "good-bye, boys," and before his companions were aware what he intended to do he had leaped over the side of the boat and sunk in the ocean waves.

There was a thrilling silence as the waters closed over his body.

Then the second sailor also arose to his feet.

"I'm going after Jack," he said, and he too plunged into the waves.

The captain rose as if to hinder him, but Bunsby placed his hand upon his arm.

"It's just as well, captain. We must all come to that, and the sooner the more suffering is saved."

"That's so," said the other sailor, tormented like his late companions by thirst aggravated by draughts of sea-water. "Good-bye, Bunsby! Good-bye, captain! I'm going!"

He, too, plunged into the sea, and Bunsby and the captain were left alone.

"You won't desert me, Bunsby?" said the captain.

"No, captain. I haven't swallowed sea-water like those poor fellows. I can stand it better."
 "There is no hope of life," said the captain, quietly; "but I don't like to go unbidden into my Maker's presence."

"Nor I. I'll stand by you, captain."
 "This is a fearful thing, Bunsby. If it would only rain."

"That would be some relief."
 As if in answer to his wish the drops began to fall—slowly at first, then more copiously, till at last their clothing was saturated, and the boat partly filled with water.

Eagerly they squeezed out the welcome drops from their clothing, and felt a blessed relief. They filled two bottles they had remaining with the precious fluid.

"If those poor fellows had only waited," said the captain.

"They are free from suffering now," said Bunsby. The relief afforded by the rain was only temporary, and Captain Rushton and his companion felt it to be so. They were without food, and the two bottles of water would not last them long.

Still there was a slight return of hope, which survives under the most discouraging circumstances.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ship "Argonaut," bound for Calcutta, was speeding along with a fair wind, when the mainmast took on a slight list.

"Bunsby, what's that?"
 "What's what?"

The sailor pointed out a small boat a mile distant, nearly in the ship's track, rising and falling with the billows.

"Is there any one in it?"

"I see two men lying in the bottom. They are motionless. They may be dead."

The boat was soon overtaken. It was the boat from the ill-fated "Norman." Captain Rushton and Bunsby were lying stretched out in the bottom, both motionless and apparently without life. Bunsby was really dead. But there was still some life left in the captain, which, under the care of the surgeon of the ship, was carefully husbanded until he was out of immediate danger.

But his system, from long privation, had received such a shock that, his mind sympathizing with it, he fell into a kind of stupor, mental and physical, and though strength and vigour came slowly back Captain Rushton was in mind a child.

Oblivion of the past seemed to have come over him. He did not remember who he was, or that he had a wife and child.

"Poor man!" said the captain; "I greatly fear his mind has completely given way."

"It is a pity some of his friends were not here," said the captain of the ship that had rescued him.

"The sight of a familiar face might restore him."

"It is possible, but I am not sure of even that."

"Is there any clue to his identity?"

"I have found none."

It will at once occur to the reader that the receipt would have supplied the necessary information, since it was dated Millbury, and contained the captain's name. But this was concealed in an inner pocket in Captain Rushton's vest, and escaped the attention of the surgeon. So, nameless and unknown, he was carried to Calcutta, which he reached without any perceptible improvement in his mental condition.

Arrived at Calcutta the question arose: What should be done with him?

It was a perplexing question, since, if carried back to England, it might be difficult to identify him there or restore him to his friends.

Besides, the care of a man in his condition would be a greater responsibility than most shipmasters would care to undertake.

It was at this crisis that a large-hearted and princely merchant, resident in Calcutta, who had learned the particulars of the captain's condition, came forward, saying:

"Leave him here. I will find him a home in some suitable house, and defray such expenses as may be required. Heaven has blessed me with abundant means. It is only right that I should employ a portion in its service. I hope, under good treatment, he may recover wholly, and be able to tell me who he is and where is his home. When so much is ascertained, if his health be sufficiently good, I will send him home at my own expense."

This offer was thankfully accepted, and the generous merchant was as good as his word. A home was found for Captain Rushton in the lodging-house of Mrs. Start, a widow, who, thrown upon her own exertions for support, had, by the help of the merchant already referred to, opened a lodging-house, which was now quite remunerative.

"He will require considerable care, Mrs. Start,"

said Mr. Perkins, the merchant, "but I am ready and willing to compensate you for all the trouble to which you will be put. Will you take him?"

"Certainly I will," said the warm-hearted widow, "if only because you ask it. But for you I should not be earning a comfortable living, with a little laid by besides."

"Thank you, Mrs. Start," said the merchant. "I know the poor man could be in no better hands. But you mustn't let any considerations of gratitude interfere with your charging a fair price for your trouble. I am able and willing to pay whatever is suitable."

"I don't believe we shall quarrel on that point," said the widow, smiling. "I will do all I can for your friend. What is his name?"

"That I don't know."

"We shall have to call him something."

"Call him Smith then. That will answer till we find out his real name, as we may some day when his mind comes back, as I hope it may."

From that time, therefore, Captain Rushton was known as Mr. Smith. He recovered in a considerable degree his bodily health, but mentally he remained in the same condition.

Sometimes he fixed his eyes upon Mrs. Start, and seemed struggling to remember something of the past; but after a few moments his face would assume a blank look, and he would give up the attempt as fruitless.

One day when Mrs. Start addressed him as Mr. Smith he asked:

"Why do you call me by that name?"

"Is not that your name?" she asked.

"No."

"What then is it?"

He put his hand to his brow and seemed to be thinking.

At length he turned to the widow, and said, abruptly:

"Do you not know my name?"

"No."

"Nor do I," he answered, and left the room hastily.

She continued, therefore, to address him as Mr. Smith, and he gradually became accustomed to it, and answered to it.

Leaving Captain Rushton at Calcutta, with the assurance that, though separated from home and family, he will receive all the care that his condition requires, we return to our hero, shut up on shipboard with his worst enemy, for though Halbert Davis disliked him it was only the feeling of a boy and was free from the intensity of Ben Haley's hatred.

No doubt it was imprudent for Robert to reject the mate's hand, but he felt that he could not grasp in friendship the hand which had deprived him of a father. He was bold enough to brave the consequences of this act, which he foresaw clearly.

Ben Haley, however, was in no hurry to take the vengeance which he was fully resolved sooner or later to wreak upon our young hero. He was content to bide his time. Had Robert been less watchful indeed he might have supposed that the mate's feelings towards him had changed.

When they met, as in the narrow limits of a ship they must do every day, the forms of courtesy passed between them.

Robert always saluted the mate, and Haley responded by a nod or a cool good-morning, but did not indulge in any conversation.

Sometimes, however, turning suddenly, Robert would catch a malignant glance from the mate, but Haley's expression immediately changed when thus surprised, and he assumed an air of indifference.

With Captain Eldon, on the other hand, Robert was on excellent terms. The captain liked the bold, manly boy, and talked much with him of the different countries he had visited, and seemed glad to answer the questions which our hero asked.

"Robert," said the captain one day, "how is it that you and Mr. Haley seemed to have nothing to say to each other?"

"I don't think he likes me, Captain Eldon," said Robert.

"Is there any reason for it, or is it merely a prejudice?"

"There is a reason for it, but I don't care to mention it. Not that it is anything I have reason to regret, or to be ashamed of," he added, hastily. "It is on Mr. Haley's account that I prefer to keep it secret."

"Is there no chance of your being on better terms?" asked the captain, good-naturedly desirous of effecting a reconciliation.

Robert shook his head.

"I don't wish to be reconciled, captain," he said. "I will tell you this much that Mr. Haley has done me, or my family, an injury which perhaps can never be repaired. I cannot forget it, and though I am willing to be civil to him, since we are thrown to-

gether, I do not want his friendship, even if he desired mine, as I am sure he does not."

Captain Eldon was puzzled by this explanation, which threw very little light upon the subject, and he made no farther efforts to bring the two together.

Time passed, and, whatever might be Ben Haley's feelings, he abstained from any attempt to injure Robert, whose suspicions thus became lulled to sleep, and he ceased to be as vigilant and watchful as he had been.

His frank, familiar manner made him a favourite on shipboard. He had a friendly word for all the sailors, which was appreciated, for it was known that he was a protégé of the owner. He was supposed by some to be a relation, or at any rate a near connexion, and so was treated with unusual respect. All the sailors had a kind word for him, and many were the praises which he received in the fore-castle. Among those most devoted to him was a boy of fourteen, Frank Price, who had sailed in the capacity of cabin-boy.

The poor boy was very seasick at first, and Captain Eldon had been indulgent, and excused him from duty until he got better. He was not sturdy enough for the life upon which he had entered, and would gladly have found himself again in the comfortable home which a mistaken impulse had led him to exchange for the sea.

With this boy Robert, who was of about the same age, struck up a friendship, which was returned twofold by Frank, whose heart, naturally warm, was easily won by kindness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE voyage was more than half completed, and nothing of importance had occurred to mark it. But at this time, Captain Eldon fell ill. His malady proved to be a fever, and was very severe. The surgeon was in attendance, but the attack baffled all his skill.

At the end of seven days it terminated fatally, to the great grief of all on board, with whom the good-natured captain was very popular. There was one exception, however, to the general grief.

It is an ill wind that blows good to no one, and Ben Haley did not lament much over an event which promoted him to the command of the vessel. Of course he did not show this feeling publicly, but in secret his heart bounded with exultation at the thought that he was for the time master of the ship and all on board. He was not slow in asserting his new position.

Five minutes after the captain breathed his last one of the sailors approached him and asked for orders, addressing him as:

"Mr. Haley."

"Captain Haley!" roared the new commander; "if you don't know my position on board this ship it's time you found it out."

"Ay, ay, sir," stammered the sailor, taken aback at his unexpected violence.

Robert mourned sincerely at the death of Captain Eldon, by whom he had always been treated with the utmost kindness. Even had he not been influenced by such a feeling he would have regarded with apprehension the elevation to the command of one whom he well knew to be actuated by a feeling of enmity to himself. He resolved to be as prudent as possible, and avoid, as far as he could, any association with Haley. But the latter was determined, now that he had acquired the command, to pick a quarrel with our hero, and began to cast about for a fitting occasion.

Now that Captain Eldon was dead Robert spent as much time as the lad's duties would permit with Frank Price.

The boys held long and confidential conversations together, imparting to each other their respective hopes and wishes.

Haley observed their intimacy and mutual attachment, and, unable to assert his authority over Robert, who was a passenger, determined to strike at him through his friend.

His determination was strengthened by a conversation which he overheard between the boys when they supposed him beyond earshot.

"I wish Captain Eldon were alive," said Frank.

"I liked him and I don't like Captain Haley."

"Captain Eldon was an excellent man," said Robert.

"He knew how to treat a fellow," said Frank.

"As long as he saw us doing our best he was easy with us. Captain Haley is a tyrant."

"Be careful what you say, Frank," said Robert.

"It isn't safe to say much about the officers."

"I wouldn't say anything except to you. You are my friend."

"I am your true friend, Frank, and I don't want you to get into any trouble."

"I am sure you don't like the captain any better than I do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

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"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."

"I don't like him any more than you do."



[THE FATAL REMEDY.]

"I don't like the captain for more reasons than I can tell you; but I shall keep quiet as long as I am on board this ship."

"Are you going back with us?"

"I don't know. It will depend upon circumstances. I don't think I shall, though I might have done so had Captain Eldon remained in command."

"I wish I could leave it and stay with you."

"I wish you could, Frank. Perhaps you can."

"I will try."

Haley overheard the last part of this conversation. He took particular notice of Robert's remark that he would keep quiet as long as he remained on board the ship, and inferred that on arriving at the destined port our hero would expose all he knew about him.

This made him uneasy, for it would injure, if not destroy, his prospect of remaining in command of the "Argonaut."

He resented also the dislike which Robert had cautiously expressed, and the similar feeling cherished by the cabin-boy. He had half a mind to break in upon their conversation on the spot, but after a moment's thought walked away, his proximity unsuspected by the two boys.

"They shall both rue their impudence," he muttered. "They shall find out that they cannot insult me with impunity."

The next day, when both boys were on deck, Captain Haley harshly ordered Frank to attend to a certain duty which he had already performed.

"I have done so, sir," said Frank, in a respectful tone.

"None of your impudence, you young rascal!" roared the captain, lashing himself into a rage.

Frank looked up into his face in astonishment, unable to account for so violent an outbreak.

"What do you mean by looking me in the face in that impudent manner?" demanded Captain Haley, furiously.

"I didn't mean to be impudent, Captain Haley," said Frank. "What have I done?"

"What have you done? You, a cabin-boy, have dared to insult your captain, and, by heavens, you shall rue it! Strip off your jacket!"

Frank turned pale. He knew what this order meant.

Public floggings were sometimes administered on shipboard, but under the command of Captain Eldon nothing of the kind had taken place.

Robert, who had heard the whole, listened with unmeasured indignation to this wanton abuse of power on the part of Captain Haley. His eyes flashed, and his youthful form dilated with righteous indignation.

Robert was not the only one who witnessed with indignation the captain's brutality.

Such of the sailors as happened to be on deck shared his feelings.

Haley, glancing around him, caught the look with which Robert regarded him, and triumphed inwardly that he had found a way to chafe him.

"What have you got to say about it?" he demanded, addressing our hero with a sneer.

"Since you have asked my opinion," said Robert, boldly, "I will express it. Frank Price has not been guilty of any impudence, and deserves no punishment."

This was a bold speech to be made by a boy to a captain on his own deck, and the sailors who heard it inwardly applauded the pluck of the lad who uttered it.

"What do you mean by that, sir?" exclaimed Haley, his eyes lighting up fiercely as he strode to the spot where Robert stood, and frowned upon him menacingly.

"You asked my opinion, and I gave it," said Robert, not flinching.

"I have a great mind to have you flogged too!" said Haley.

"I am not one of your crew, Captain Haley," said Robert, coolly; "and you have no right to lay a hand on me."

"What is to prevent me, I should like to know?" "I am here as a passenger, and a friend of the owner of this vessel. If I receive any ill-treatment it shall be reported to him."

If the sailors had dared, they would have applauded the stripling who, undaunted by the menacing attitude of the captain, faced him boldly and fearlessly.

Haley would gladly have knocked him down, but there was something in the resolute mien of his young passenger that made him pause. He knew that he would keep his word, and that with such representations as he might make he would stand no farther chance of being employed by Mr. Morgan.

"I have an account to settle with you, boy," he said, "and the settlement will not long be delayed. When a passenger tries to incite mutiny he forfeits his privileges as a passenger."

"Who has done this, Captain Haley?"

"You have done it."

"I deny it," said Robert.

"Your denial is worth nothing. I have a right to throw you into irons, and I may yet do it. At present I have other business in hand."

He left Robert and walked back to Frank Price, who, not having Robert's courage, had been a

terrified listener to the colloquy between him and the captain.

"Now, boy," he said, harshly, "I will give you a lesson that you shall remember to the latest day of your life. Bring me the cat."

The barbarous cat, as it was called, was brought, and Captain Haley signalled to one of the sailors to approach.

"Bates," he said, in a tone of authority, "give that boy a dozen lashes."

Bates was a stout sailor, rough in appearance, but with a warm and kindly heart. He had a son at home, about the age of Frank Price, and his heart had warmed to the boy, whose position he felt to be far from an enviable one.

The task now imposed upon him was a most distasteful and unwelcome one. He was a good sailor, and aimed on all occasions to show proper obedience to the commands of his officers, but now he could not.

"Captain Haley," he said, not stirring from his position, "I hope you will excuse me."

"Is this mutiny?" roared the captain.

"No, Captain Haley; I always mean to do my duty on board ship."

"I have told you to flog this boy."

"I cannot do it, Captain Haley. I have a boy of my own about the size of that one there, and if I struck him I'd think it was my own boy that stood in his place."

The unexpected opposition excited the fierce resentment of the captain. He felt that a crisis had come, and he was determined to be obeyed.

"Unless you do as I bid you I will keep you in irons for the rest of the voyage."

"You are the captain of this ship, and can throw me into irons if you like," said Bates, with an air of dignity despite his tarred hands and sailor jacket. "I have refused to do no duty that belongs to me. When I signed my name to the ship's papers I did not agree to flog boys."

"Put him in irons!" roared the captain, incensed.

"We will see who is captain of this ship."

The mandate was obeyed, and Bates was lodged in the forecabin securely ironed.

The captain himself seized the cat, and was about to apply it to the luckless cabin-boy when a terrible wind, springing up in an instant, as it were, struck the ship, almost throwing her upon her side. There was no time for punishment now. The safety of the ship required instant action, and Frank Price was permitted to replace his jacket without having received a blow.

(To be continued.)



[A TRUE HERO.]

WINIFRED'S DIAMONDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Charmed Rubies," "The Baronet's Secret,"
&c., &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied.

MOORE.

THERE are some wounds, once made, which are not easily healed or forgotten—some quarrels so deadly that the only wise course to adopt is to bury their very memory, if possible, in oblivion, as speedily as can be done.

And this was one of that unhappy nature.

Neither Winifred nor her mother could forget the words that had passed between them, though both would have given worlds to do so. The daughter felt that the home of her mother was a home for her no longer. The mother grew the more unyielding because she saw so plainly that her child would not give way. And there arose sadness and silence between them both—a sadness so heavy, and a silence so strange, that death or absence would have been far preferable to a living presence so altered and estranged as this.

Full of grief and weariness, poor Winifred left her home at an early hour on the following morning, and walked slowly up the mountain road by which the young clergyman came from the Rectory to their cottage. She wished so much to see him that she determined to go on quite to his home unless she met him on her way.

Fate did not befriend her as she hoped it would do. The young minister was not abroad that morning, but seated in his snug study—the only furnished room, except his bed-chamber, at the Rectory. He was engaged in a struggle with his own heart, which was so painful that it seemed, at times, almost too much for him to bear.

Now that he was away from the inspiration of Winifred's tearful eyes and grateful smiles it seemed an awful and monstrous thing that he should sit down deliberately to slay his own happiness and insure that of a rival, who, after all, might not be one half so worthy of his heart and hand as himself.

What if the tale the countess had told was true! She knew how fondly Winifred had loved the young and handsome officer—how much she had suffered when she broke the tie that bound them, at the call of duty—why should she wound the heart of the girl with an idle story that had no foundation when a moment's

inquiry would have satisfied her of the truth or falsehood of the tale?

And, if it was true, was it meet or becoming in him, or in Winifred, to recall the truant knight to his allegiance?

If it was false, why then did not the reasons still exist that had been deemed sufficient to separate them before?

Winifred, with all her grace and beauty, was but humbly born; and his cousin was proud, very proud—had been so in his boyhood, and was sure to be even more so now that he had become a man.

Perhaps he was glad to be released, in spite of the natural pangs with which at first he had received his dear-bought freedom.

If this was the case would it not be better for Winifred to forget in her turn, grow reconciled to her loss, and console herself with the faithful devotion of a heart that beat alone for her and cared naught for the vexed questions of birth and pedigree?

Sorely tempted and perplexed by the enchanting visions that rose up before him with this passing thought, the young man pushed pen and paper away, and laid his head down upon his hands, yielding, in spite of himself, for a few moments, to the sweet whisperings of that happy dream.

A knock at the door roused him. His housekeeper entered, and said that a young lady wished to speak with him.

"A young lady!" he exclaimed, with great astonishment, for he was not venerable enough himself in years or appearance to allow of his receiving calls in private from the lambs of his flock, unless attended by their mammas—"a young lady did you say, Wilson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who is she?"

"I do not know, sir."

"How does she look?"

"Tall, and good looking, sir—a great deal too good looking, in my opinion, to be asking to see young gentlemen alone in their own study," said the housekeeper, who was evidently not a little scandalized at the unusual event.

"Pshaw—show her in, Wilson, if you please," he answered, turning very red as he noted her suspicious face. "Some person on business—or a district visitor, most probably."

"Indeed, sir!" said Wilson, with a dignified sniff. "Very well, sir."

So she went out, returning again in a few moments, and holding the door wide open, while she announced:

"The young person, sir!" in her most acid tones, and with a withering look at the visitor that was entirely lost upon its recipient.

The clergyman looked round at the open door, then sprang past the housekeeper, nearly upsetting her, and grasped the young lady by the hand—by both hands in fact.

"Person, indeed—the young person! My dear Winifred—I beg pardon, my dear Miss Hughes—I am at a loss how to thank you for this honour. Mrs. Wilson, this is the daughter of your old friend, Mrs. Hughes. Pray, send her up a glass of lemonade and a slice of cake after her long walk."

"Nothing for me, I beg," began Winifred, but the mollified housekeeper had already disappeared to execute her master's order.

"Not a word, dear friend! All that is in this house is yours, and you must need some refreshment after your long walk. Here is Mrs. Wilson. Make her drink a glass of lemonade, Wilson, if she will take nothing else."

The housekeeper obeyed—saw that the lemonade was swallowed, then placed a tray on the table, and discreetly retired—but not much farther than the keyhole of the study door.

Winifred felt better as she sipped the lemonade. Then she looked at her host and smiled.

"You see I am refreshing myself before I begin my story," she said.

He sat down beside her, and took her hand in his.

"Has anything happened?"

"Much."

"Tell me all."

"My mother was deceived by our friendly parting yesterday."

"I thought as much."

"She questioned me closely after you had gone."

"And you?"

"What could I do? I told her the truth."

"What did she say?"

The poor girl sighed at the memory of that painful and humiliating scene.

"Never mind," he said, gently. "You need not tell me unless you choose to do so."

"Oh, you may as well hear it, since it concerns us both. She is bitterly angry, and—in short, my dear friend, she has turned me away from her home—unless—unless—"

"You consent to make me the happiest of men."

There was a long silence.

He pressed the hand he held.

"Winifred, I have been thinking long and deeply of all this to-day. It may be that the report the

countess heard is true. And, if it is, will not the devotion of my whole life—

She snatched her hand from his with a low, grieved cry.

"And you, too! Oh, it has been my only comfort, amid all this pain, to remember how good and noble and generous you were! Are you too about to change? Must I rank you among my enemies? Will you too try to persuade me that he is false, when I am willing to stake my life and happiness upon his truth and sincerity? It is too much—too much!"

And the big tears rose in her beautiful eyes as she gazed mournfully at him.

"Forgive me, and I will offend no more!" he said, humbly. "It was a strong and evil temptation while it lasted, but I have put it for ever from me now. In future, Winifred, look upon me as your brother and your friend only, and you shall have no reason to repent your confidence. I solemnly declare I once more, and this time with all my heart and soul."

"I may really trust you now."

"You may indeed—and I will listen to those tempting whispers no more. See, I will write to him now and in your very presence if you like. Nay, you yourself should dictate the words."

"There is no time now," she said, with a sad smile. "I trust that letter to your honour and your friendship, my good brother. At present I require another service at your hands."

"Name it."

"I must leave my home."

"Nay, Winifred—"

"Hear me out. Words were spoken last night—bitter words—which neither my mother nor I can ever forget. They must be the last of their kind. I could not bear contention and ill-feeling—I could rather go out into the world and beg my bread from door to door."

"Help me to get away—not indeed to beg, for by the earl's bounty I have all I need—but help me to find some temporary home till she is ready to forgive me and receive me back without a word of this dispute. You can tell her when I have gone that that what she wishes cannot be. She will listen to it and believe it from your lips, though not from mine—and you can by degrees teach her to submit to it, as to anything that is inevitable or impossible."

"And in the meantime—you are a clergyman—and a word from you might establish me in some honest if not pleasant home, where I might remain till all this unhappy dissension is over. Do not shake your head or look so grave, my dear, dear friend! In one word—I am miserable here—and I must go! I cannot bear life—at least as I must live it here—and if you indeed love me you will aid me to go!"

She clasped her hands and looked at him so imploringly that he could not find it in his heart to refuse the boon for which she pleaded. Yet it seemed a strange, almost a dangerous idea to him.

"Listen to me, my dear friend," he said, at last. "I will see your mother myself, and show her that, as you have decided, it is impossible for her to carry out the wish of her heart. I will make peace between you once more—I am sure that I can do it—and you will remain here in safety among us, and cease to think of trying the world by yourself. The world!—you have no idea, my child, what a great, cruel, raving monster it is—nor how little care and consideration and kindness you would meet with from those who are struggling there—each one for a footing, a little safer and a little higher than his fellows around him have been able to reach."

She shook her head impatiently.

"I hope you will make peace between me and my mother; but do not ask me to stay here a day longer than is strictly necessary. My very heart aches and pines within me at the thought. I cannot do it. I need change—and change I must have of one kind or another—or die! Do be kind and pitiful, my dear friend, and help me to get away from a place where but for you and your kindness the very air I breathe would be hateful to my senses!"

There was no resisting this urgent appeal, and with an anxious face the young man set himself to consider how best he could respond to it satisfactorily.

"If I only knew the kind of place you wish for," he said, aloud, at last.

"Oh, any quiet home."

She passed her, for Mr. Jones was looking at her with a face full of a suddenly awakened idea.

"What is it?" she asked, eagerly. "I know you have thought of something for me—something nice too. I can see it in your eyes."

"I am afraid you will be disappointed in the story my eyes have told you then," he said, smiling, "but a thought certainly did strike me just then, I confess."

"Let me have the benefit of it."

"I have an unmarried aunt in North Wales, near Conway Castle, who lives by herself, in an old grange—once our family seat—with a few old family ser-

vants, almost as quaint and eccentric as herself. She wrote to my mother a week or two ago, asking her to find her a suitable companion—a young girl who had the education and manners of a lady, one who would not be afraid of several hours' work at writing, casting up accounts, or reading aloud. Now if you would be willing—"

Winifred clasped her hands with a thankful look.

"The very thing! Do you think you can get the situation for me?"

"I know I can. My mother took no steps in the matter—for, to tell the truth, she and my Aunt Eloise get along much as only sisters always do—and she merely remarked that if she sent any one Eloise would only send her back with a message that she did not suit, and therefore she should spare herself any trouble about the business."

"I am so glad—so glad! It will be the very thing for me."

"It will indeed be a pleasant and a suitable home for you, if you can only make up your mind to bear with my aunt. But I give you fair warning that she is one of the oddest of mortals."

"I care little for that. Her oddity would not affect me in the least. It can scarcely extend to the duties I shall have to perform for her."

"I am not so sure of that. The house is very retired—very old—and rather lonely."

"So much the better."

"There are no young people in the place."

"I wish for none."

"The only visitors you will be likely to see are the rector and his wife, and the surgeon of the village, who is seventy years old if he is a day."

"I will go," said Winifred, rising from her seat with a look of decision.

"When?"

"The sooner the better. Will you write me a letter of introduction to your aunt?"

"Certainly. One of introduction and recommendation combined."

"Will she accept it?"

"As well as if it came from my mother herself. My aunt has the highest opinion of my judgment—poor though it may be."

"Then, since the path is so clear, let me beg of you to do me this service at once. Can you bring me the letter to-morrow evening?"

"I can."

"Then on the following morning I will start for her house."

"So soon?"

"Every moment is painful here now that my home happiness has gone."

"Be it so," he answered, with a sigh. "The parting will be quite as painful a year hence—the sooner it is over the better perhaps for me. But, Winifred—"

"Well?"

"Think of me now and then when you are far away."

"Often, often!" she said, touched by his emotion and the trembling of his voice; "and always as of my best, truest, and dearest friend."

"Save one," he added, with a faint smile.

"His truth, you know, has been doubted. Prove for me that it is yet un tarnished, and I shall be more grateful still—if that indeed can be."

"I will do my best to make you and him happy as your hearts can wish."

"I know you will, and may you be blessed in your turn with the gift of a heart as warm and true as mine must ever be to him. Now farewell!"

"Farewell till to-morrow evening. I will be with you by seven," he replied as he saw her safely down the steps and past the gate that led towards the mountain road.

He would have accompanied her, but she forbade him; and, guessing her heart's dearest wish, though her lips forbore to speak it, he returned to his study and wrote a letter to Hugh Rhyse—the hardest task, the most painful duty he had ever performed in the whole course of his quiet and uneventful life.

Then he wrote another and a far different epistle to his Aunt Eloise, in whose pages Winifred was gifted with every grace and good quality under the sun.

Had a fairy god-mother presided in her happiest mood over her infant cradle, she could not have been more bountifully endowed than by him.

Having completed these labours, and gone his round of pastoral visits among the mountains, the young clergyman laid his head upon his pillow and slept that sleep which a clear conscience alone can give.

The next morning was devoted to the afflicted and the poor once more, but at five p.m. he closed the gates of his house behind him, his duties all done, and set forward down the mountain path, bearing in his breast pocket the two letters—one of which was to give the lady of his love a more comfortable and

happy home, while the other summoned her lover, more favoured than himself, once more to her side.

There are heroic men in this weary world of ours, but I doubt if the bravest soldier who ever faced the cannon's mouth deserved the glorious name of hero more truly than the slender, pale-faced clergyman who, with his bashful mien and unassuming modesty of manner, had taken the very light and sunshine from his own life without a single murmur and laid them, as his only offering, beneath the feet of the woman he worshipped—the woman who gave him in return for his sacrifice nothing but friendship.

(To be continued.)

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LORD ANGUS was holding high carnival at Strathspoy Castle. He was not the young man to mope the days away in solitude, if the earl his father did lie at the point of death. He had quite a score of young friends of his own calibre to keep him company, acquaintances from London and Paris, and young officers from the barracks. They passed their mornings in fox-hunting and their evenings at cards and in wild carousals.

On the morning referred to in the last chapter the young lord was yawning over a late breakfast with some half a dozen of his boon companions, when a message from The Firs arrived. The footman entered the breakfast parlour in pale dismay.

"I beg your pardon, my lord, but there's news from The Firs. I don't quite understand what, but somebody's dead, the man says, and they want your lordship to come at once."

Lord Angus arose with alacrity.

"Order my horse at once," he commanded. As the servant departed to do his bidding, "Get away, boys," he cried, addressing his companions, "and excuse me for an hour or two. The dying to know the truth. By Jove, a fellow can afford to lose his breakfast with the prospect of an earlism so near—"

The eldest of them looked shocked, but the young lord took no heed, he caught up his gloves and whip, and, hurrying down, vaulted into his saddle, and galloped away like the wind. He reached The Firs half breathless, his horse white with foam, and found the household in a panic.

"What is it?" he questioned, from his saddle, of the first servant he saw. "How fares the earl this morning?"

"The earl is much better, my lord, but Sir Varney is dead!"

"The deuce he is! What a pity it wasn't the earl instead," and, wheeling his horse, he shot off again, leaving the well-bred serving-man firmly convinced that he was a madman.

The household met that morning at Hensbury Crossing for a long run down towards Hounslow Heath, and thither the young heir of Strathspoy Castle repaired with his wild companions.

"I suppose the governor will be coming home soon," he remarked, "so we'll have our fun while we may, boys!"

And away he went, the leader of the party, while his father hung as it were upon the brink of death.

The chase was an exciting one, and the young lord was foremost at the death, for he was a bold and skilful rider.

Late in the afternoon, on his jaded and weary horse, he ambled homeward, feeling so fagged and spent that he dropped in at the "Golden Lion" for a drink of brandy, and thereby got separated from his companions.

One drink rarely sufficed for Lord Angus; he took half a dozen that afternoon, and, flushed and excited, resumed his homeward way in the glow of the spring sunset.

Maggie Reufrow was in the garden, gathering berries for her father's tea, as he rode by, chanting a bacchanalian chorus. Just beyond the bars a flock of sheep were browsing, and as Lord Angus came up, the reins lying loose upon his horse's neck, one of them ran bleating across the highway.

His horse shied, plunged forward, and cleared the bars with one flying leap, throwing his master, who was scarcely in a condition to control him, far over his head. The road led up a rocky ascent, and the young man had a hard fall.

Maggie, who witnessed the accident, uttered a cry of alarm when she saw the horse go galloping off, leaving the young lord prostrate on his face, and without an instant's hesitation she ran to his assistance.

"Oh, my lord," she cried, recognising him at once, "are you very much hurt?"

He made no answer, so effort to stir.

Maggie grew very pale, but she was a resolute, strong-winded girl, despite her willowy figure and

pretty child's face. She knelt down beside him and raised his head. His face was covered with dust and blood, and there was an ugly cut upon his right temple.

"I wonder what I shall do?" said Maggie; "I wish papa would come!"

Then, bending over the prostrate heir, she cleaned the dust and blood from his brow with a dainty muslin apron.

"My lord," she cried, "can't you try to get up?"

The young man was pretty severely stunned by the fall, and that, together with the effects of the strong brandy he had just drunk, for the moment completely stupefied him. But at Maggie's second effort to rouse him he opened his eyes and stared vacantly about him.

"What the deuce is it? Where am I?" he muttered.

"You fell from your horse, and you are lying in the road just now. Won't you please try to get up?" said Maggie, scarcely able to repress her amusement.

Her voice struck him, and he stared up into her face, the vacant look gradually changing into an expression of surprised admiration.

"Heaven! What a beautiful creature!" he ejaculated; "who are you?"

The girl arose to her feet with chilling dignity.

"It doesn't matter about me, my lord," she said; "don't you think you can manage to get up?"

He struggled to his feet, shaking the dust from his head and shoulders, and essaying to make a step, but he grew faint and dizzy and put his hand to his head.

"I've had a pretty sharp crack there," he said, touching the wound on his temple; "confound that horse—where is he I wonder?"

"At the castle by this time," replied Maggie, "judging from the speed with which he left here."

Lord Angus steadied himself against a post, and gazed about him in dubious perplexity.

"If you will allow me I'll try to assist you to the house," said Maggie; "my father, Doctor Renfrew, will be here in a very few minutes, and no doubt he will be able to help you."

"I shall be very much obliged to you, I'm sure," he replied, his bold eyes full of admiration; "if you would just keep me a little steady I could manage to walk."

Maggie took hold of his arm with both her little berry-stained hands, and guided him along past the gate, and up the pretty, fir-shaded avenue that led to the cottage.

She got him into the sitting-room and on a comfortable lounge.

"Now," she said, "I know what papa would do, and if you'll suffer me I'll wash that cut and bind up your head."

"But I'm afraid I am troubling you too much," replied his lordship, watching her as she flattered about in her pink dress, her bronze-brown curls in a chignon, reminding one of a dainty humming bird.

"Oh, no," she said, quietly, "it's no trouble—we are used to such things, you know, papa being a doctor, and I quite often help him."

So she brought a basin of water, washed the dust from his face, and banded the wound, with gentle, skilful fingers.

"What a lovely creature!" thought his lordship, thrilling at every touch of her soft fingers.

"How intensely disagreeable," mused Maggie, averting her face from his brandy-scented breath as she banded his forehead.

At this juncture the old doctor appeared.

"It is young Lord Strathpey from the castle, papa," explained Maggie; "his horse threw him just beyond our gate, and I've done what I could for him."

Whereupon she went out to finish her preparations for tea, leaving her father and Lord Angus to get acquainted after their own fashion.

Doctor Renfrew was not overwhelmed with admiration for the half-drunken young heir, nor by any means anxious for his company; but, despite his brusque manner, he was a high-bred, courtly old man, utterly incapable of rudeness or inhospitality.

He therefore made the young lord welcome to remain where he was, and afforded him all the relief his medical skill suggested.

So Lord Angus drank tea under the vine-shaded porch, with Maggie at the head of the dainty table, in her crisp, fresh muslin, with a rose-bud in her curls; he remained at the house all night, and had breakfast the next morning, at which Maggie presided, looking even more charming, if possible; and when his dog-cart came over at twelve o'clock he took his departure reluctantly, and as much in love as it was possible for him to be.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was nearing the middle of June. For an entire month Judith Ford had been steadily pursu-

ing her object, yet to no purpose. She had travelled almost the entire length and breadth of England, visiting every madhouse, both private and public, into which she could gain admittance: yet nowhere could she hear of such a place as Milford Grange, or find the slightest clue to her lost lady. Any other girl would have despaired, and given over the thing as hopeless, in the face of the rebuffs and difficulties that Judith encountered, but she was one of those persons in whom energy and unyielding determination are vital forces. She hoped against hope in the very face of despair.

The middle of June found her down in Lancashire, at a little public-house, on the edge of Lancaster Moor, called the "White Hart." She had been there before, in the first week after she left the castle, and had failed in gaining admittance into the handsome county asylum for the insane that stood out upon the moor; and, led by a kind of impulse, she took the place on her return route, determined to make a second trial.

The landlady of the "White Hart" was a pleasant, chatty little woman, and she and Judith speedily became the best of friends.

They sat out upon the back porch, in the golden glamour of a June sunset, when Judith had been there some three or four days—Mrs. Thatcher dandling her black-eyed baby on her knee, and Judith looking away towards the distant glimmer of the Irish Sea with solemn, wistful eyes.

Life was growing to be very earnest and sorrowful to poor Judith; nowhere in the wide world, perhaps, could there be found another young person so quiet and cheerful of demeanour and yet so utterly hopeless at heart. Apart from her generous efforts for those she loved, she had not a single personal interest.

Since the day when she read that brief notice in the breakfast-parlour at Ankleud Oaks poor Judith's heart had lain dead and hopeless. The "Victoria" was lost, and Hendrick was gone, and Judith's personal interest in life had gone with him.

She was thinking it all over as she sat there that June afternoon on the porch of the "White Hart" inn, her sad eyes wandering far out to sea, thinking of the dear, kindly face that the cruel waves had forever hidden, and picturing what might have been if Hendrick could only have come back to her. Half a score and more of years made no change with Judith; her love was as true and tender, her loss as bitter and irreparable, as in the first hour of her bereavement. But she was intensely unselfish, she never magnified or paraded her own sorrow; the tears were gathering thick in her brown eyes, but she forced them back and turned calmly to her hostess.

"And you really think, Mrs. Thatcher," she said, resuming a former conversation; "that I shall succeed in getting a permit to the asylum?"

Mrs. Thatcher gave her baby a toss and a kiss before she replied.

"Thatcher says you may," she said, "which he knows too, being as he is in the squire's employ and he said he'd make mention of it this very evening—I suppose you'll know when he comes home."

"It's very kind of him," replied Judith; "I feel very anxious to gain admittance. Do you ever see any of the inmates, Mrs. Thatcher?"

"Bless me, yes. They parade 'em out summer days, and sometimes they pass right by the door. Many be the drink of beer I've give the poor, crazy creatures! There was one young man in particular I used to feel so sorry for—a fine, handsome fellow he was, a kind of sailor, I think; and such a mild, mournful look on his face."

"And what became of him?" asked Judith; "had he no friends?"

"I believe not—and I haven't seen him this month or so—they transfers 'em sometimes, and jebber, he's been transferred."

"They transfer them, do they?"

"Yes, indeed—Hush-a-by, baby, your mamma's a lady—yes, indeed, they transfers 'em. Way, near all of these over on the moor be brought up from 'Milford Grange' last summer, and a wild looking lot be some of 'em."

Judith caught her breath. At last, and from the lips of this chatty little bar-woman, she heard it.

"Milford Grange!" she repeated, in a voice tremulous with suppressed excitement; "and where is that?"

"Oh, further down a good bit," replied Mrs. Thatcher, giving her baby a vigorous toss, "way down about the coast point. They used to keep 'em down there, but the old place be falling to pieces, and they transfers 'em all to the moor."

"You are sure none are kept down there now?"

"Sure enough—the Grange was left to go to rack, but a month ago young Lord Rose bought it and be a buildin' it up for a residence, and a doleful residence 'twill be, right down on the coast, in a thicket of wild firs."

Judith rose to her feet in a tremor from head to foot.

"Oh, Mrs. Thatcher," she cried, "you don't know what a favour you have done me! For over a month I have been searching in vain for Milford Grange."

"I beg your pardon, young woman," returned the landlady, with wide, amazed eyes, "but what can you want of Milford Grange? The young lord as lives there now—"

"I had a dear friend sent to Milford Grange over twelve years ago," interrupted Judith, "and I have been trying to find her ever since. Oh, Mrs. Thatcher, I hope I shall not fall now."

Judith was sobbing now, despite her calmness and self-repression, and Mrs. Thatcher, a kind-hearted little woman, brushed a sympathetic drop from her own eye against her baby's fat cheek.

"No more, you shan't," she cried; "you shall have a permit to get in at the moor, provided that will answer. Thatcher be in with the squire, and he can manage it. But 'tis a poor chance, I'm feared—winnin' folks die out powerful fast in them asylums. Be yer friend's woman?"

"She was a noble lady, the Countess of Strathpey," replied Judith.

Mrs. Thatcher came within a hair's breadth of dropping her blessed baby.

"Oh, my," she cried, "a countess? And ye hail't a tellin' me which you be a noble lady yourself, miss, a gettin' here on the 'White Hart' porch?"

"No," smiled Judith; "I was maid and companion to the countess, but I loved her, and I would give my life to find her. She was no more insane than you or I when they sent her off. She was foully dealt by, poor lady!"

"Ye shall go and hunt for her," said the landlady, "and I'll go too, leastways if I can get Jinnie to come and mind the baby, bless her heart! I've been inside of the asylum, and I'd be company for ye—and I do pray ye may succeed in finding the poor lady alive."

On the following day, through the influence of the squire, the landlord of the "White Hart" succeeded in getting the permit; and on the day after, Jinnie, the landlady's sister, having come over to look after baby, the landlady herself, accompanied by Judith, set out for the institution.

A number of the inmates were parading up and down the grounds when the two women entered the gates; and Judith, as she walked slowly up the broad avenue, scanned every face she met with a beating heart.

Poor, wan, vacant faces by the score, but nowhere the face she sought.

Speaking kindly to the poor creatures that thronged around them, the two women made their way into the building, and as a first step Judith begged leave to see Doctor Penryth, the surgeon in charge. She was accordingly conducted by one of the keepers to a small office, where the doctor soon joined them—a small, wiry little man, with an alert, ferret-like face.

Judith stated the object of her visit at once, and produced the card bearing the address of Milford Grange.

Could Doctor Penryth remember if a lady, a small, beautiful lady, with blue eyes and golden hair, Marguerite Strathpey by name, wife of Lord Strathpey of Strathpey Castle, had been transferred from Milford Grange to this asylum?

The doctor watched her keenly while she put the question.

"Countess of Strathpey!" he meditated. "Well, so many of the poor creatures fancy they are queens and countesses, 'tis a hard matter to keep the run of their names. I cannot call to mind any such name or individual. Do you come from the unfortunate lady's friends? Do you desire to remove her?"

Judith answered warily.

"I was her friend, and wish to know what has become of her."

Doctor Penryth was sorry, but he could not give her any information. He bowed himself out, and Judith requested the keeper to conduct them through the institution.

"And," she added, as he proceeded to guide them, opening her hand and showing him a five-pound note, "if you'll get me the information I desire I'll give you this."

The man grinned at the sight of the money, and bade them follow him. At the door of the head matron's room he paused, and tapped lightly. A stern and stately woman appeared.

"She can tell you if any one can," whispered the keeper.

Judith stated her business, and the matron, apparently won by her pleasant face and earnest manner, bade them enter and be seated.

"Countess of Strathpey," she repeated, putting her hand to her head. "The name sounds familiar to me—but I hear so many names. Countess of Strathpey!—what manner of woman was she?"

"Small and slender, and very lovely, with blue eyes and golden hair."

"I think I do remember her," replied the matron, at last, "or a woman of that description who called herself Countess of Strathspey. She came to us at Milford Grange, and was brought up here, and—oh, yes, I have it now—she made her escape!"

Judith uttered a cry of surprise.

"Yes," continued the matron, reflectively, "she escaped, and attempted to cross the river below here. It was swollen from prolonged rains, and the poor creature was drowned. The shawl she wore drifted ashore the next day, and her body was found about a week after. That was about two years ago, and I think her people were apprised of the event."

Judith did not utter a word.

The cruel truth had stabbed her heart like a knife. And after all her hopes and weary efforts this was the end!

She arose with a few words of thanks to the matron and passed out, slipping the five-pound note into the keeper's hand.

"Won't you look round a bit, ma'am?" he said, smirking and bowing in his delight.

Mrs. Thatcher was anxious to avail herself of the invitation, and Judith did not object.

She followed them along the dim and dusty corridors, thinking what a life her poor lady must have led shut up in that dreary place, and picturing to herself all the horrors of her attempt to escape, her very soul dissolved in pity and grief.

The cells were ranged along the corridors, with little square windows in the doors, through which the poor, crazy inmates could look out, only the most violent being closely confined.

All the way down they were peering out, laughing and gibbering, and singing—a sad sight to behold.

Judith barely glanced at them in her sorrowful preoccupation; but presently Mrs. Thatcher clutched her arm.

"There he be!" she cried, pointing to one of the windows—"the sailor feller as I told you of, which come to the 'White Hart' long ago. See, the poor soul! do let's stop and speak to him!"

Judith followed her pointing finger, and saw a pale face, lit by a pair of kindly brown eyes.

After the first glance she stood still and stared like one in a dream. Then, making a step forward, she uttered a piercing cry and fell in a deadly swoon before the door of the cell.

(To be continued.)

IMPORTANT TO BACHELORS AND WIDOWERS.—A Milwaukee lady has just buried her seventh husband. She married in 1855 at the age of seventeen, took a second husband in 1859, her last in 1870, and she wants the eighth during the current year.

THE CASHMERE GOAT.—The attempt of California to acclimatize the Cashmere goat promises success, the animal attaining a larger size and yielding a finer fleece than in its native India. There are estimated to be 40,000 Cashmeres in the State, and the fleeces, according to grade, is worth from one shilling up to five shillings per pound.

NEW DISCOVERY OF COAL.—It has been made known in the mining circles of the Midlands that the Sandwell Colliery Company (Limited) had found coal measures 200 feet below the Permian rocks, at their sinkings, four miles from Birmingham. The discovery settles a most discussed question as to the existence of coal measures below the Permians.

THAT all who are happy are equally happy is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally satisfied, but not equally happy. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher. This question was very happily illustrated by the Rev. Robert Brown: "A small drinking-glass and a large one may be equally full, but the large one holds more than the small."

DR. LOWELL MASON.—Dr. Lowell Mason, the widely known composer of church music, has just died at Orange, New Jersey, aged 82. He was instrumental in introducing music as a branch of public school instruction in America, and was the first one upon whom the degree of Doctor of Music was ever conferred in America. He was the author of more than fifty musical works, of one of which alone 600,000 copies have been sold.

A POPPY BLIGHT IN INDIA.—As a companion misfortune to our own potato blight, the Indian mail brings news of a poppy blight in the Behar and Benares districts, which has much diminished the yield of opium, and, as a natural consequence, has materially lessened the revenue derived from it. Dr. King has, it is stated, been commissioned to investigate the cause of this blight, and, as it is suspected that the yield may be permanently affected, the Government are endeavouring to introduce the cultivation of the poppy into the Punjab.

A BICYCLE FEAT.—One hundred and ten miles in

eleven and three-quarter hours was accomplished the other day on an Ariel bicycle. A young gentleman, aged sixteen years, residing near Norwich, at 4.45 a.m. mounted his bicycle (a 36-inch "Ariel") and with his travelling bag strapped in front, started from the Great Byburgh Station to Newmarket, where he breakfasted. Thence he proceeded to Whittleford, where he lunched; and at 4.30 p.m., after a most pleasant journey, he arrived safely at the house of a friend at Ware, in Hertfordshire, having accomplished a distance but little short of 110 miles in eleven hours and three-quarters, including stoppages.

THE NEW BASTARDY LAW.—By the Act passed last Session, and now in operation, the law as to orders for the maintenance of illegitimate children is materially altered, magistrates having the power to make an order for payment of 5s. instead of only 2s. 6d. per week, and also to extend such payment till the child attains the age of 16 instead of 13 years as formerly. The amount in arrears to be recoverable will be 13 weeks' contributions as under the old law, but inasmuch as the magistrates had no further power than committing to prison for a month in default where the sum claimed was under 40s., the new Act gives the power to make the commitment to prison for a period of three months.

DAYLIGHT FIREWORKS.—The Japanese have fireworks made expressly to be let off by daylight. The following description of them is taken from an account of a recent festival in the *Yokohama Herald*:—"The second day was occupied with exhibitions of the ingenious day-light fireworks, of the manufacture of which the Japanese appear to be the sole masters. As usual, these consisted mostly of bombs, which, exploding high in the air, discharged sometimes various coloured jets of smoke, and sometimes closely folded packages of wire and paper, which unfolded themselves into parachutes of great bulk and symmetrical design. They were sometimes fish, which swam leisurely through the atmosphere to the ground, or snakes, which writhed themselves away over the tree tops, or great birds, which hover kite-like and motionless for an incredibly long time. Occasionally they took the shape of cottages, temples, human beings, magnified crests of Daimios, trees and flowers—almost anything which a lively imagination could suggest. The smoke figures, however, were the most amusing. One of the most frequently attempted was a cattle-fish, with a body of thick, fuliginous black, and arms of lighter hues. Of course the illusion was very brief, the wind not allowing the smoke to remain undisturbed for more than a few seconds, but while it lasted it was perfect."

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE little enamelled Louis Quinze clock upon the marble mantelpiece in Honor's room, at Lady Thaxter's house in Park Lane, had chimed the hour of seven when her ladyship knocked lightly at Honor's door. The young girl gave admittance to her hostess, who was in evening dress, and looking very stately.

Lady Thaxter's eyes beamed with admiration upon her young guest.

Honor had attired herself in a pale blue silk, with overdress of white lace, and wore ornaments of pale pink coral. Her splendid beauty was unusually vivid and brilliant. Her pale gold hair was crimped and fluffed, after the fashion of the day, and looked like a halo around the fair, sweet, tender face, with its bright frankness, its piquant witchery. Her big eyes of dusk were brave and lovely and sweet. In dress, manner and carriage she was unmistakably a high-bred lady.

Her ladyship kissed the young girl, with a smile and a sigh, thinking how improbable it was that Sir Hugh Tregaron would care for any other woman after loving Honor.

"We will go down to the drawing-room now, my dear," she said, kindly. "My friend and guest, the Hungarian Countess of Rothsmere, is already deep in conversation with Sir Hugh—upon politics, I think. The countess is a famous politician, one of those deep-thinking women who understand all the leading questions of the day, and dares to form her own opinion of them. She is quite a power in Hungary. I hope you will like her, my dear. She is a sort of princess in her own country, lives in grand style and state, is owner of a small principality, immensely wealthy, and is a widow and childless. She will make a sensation in society, and will be besieged with suitors, but I hardly think she will marry again. I am impatient to introduce to her one of our English young ladies. We will go to her now."

Her ladyship conducted Honor downstairs to the drawing-room, a long and lofty room which had a hundred counterparts within the precincts of Bel-

In this room, in the midst of some grave discussion upon the attitude of the English Ministry in some question at the moment before the country, were the Countess of Rothsmere and Sir Hugh Tregaron.

Lady Thaxter led Honor forward with conscious satisfaction. The girl's quiet self-possession, her total unconsciousness of self, her perfect good-breeding, her shy, sweet grace, and, above all, her glorious beauty, awakened Lady Thaxter's pride in her and her affection for her.

"Lady Rothsmere," she said, "permit me to introduce to you my dear young friend and guest, Miss Glint, for whom I bespeak your cordial friendship."

Lady Rothsmere arose and acknowledged the introduction with a charming grace and courtesy.

As, however, her eyes rested full upon Honor's face she started and turned pale, exhibiting an agitation as singular as sudden.

"I—I beg your pardon, dear Lady Thaxter," she said, in a sweet, cultured voice, now oddly tremulous, "but this young lady's face reminds me of one I know once. I could almost fancy I had seen Miss Glint before;" and she made a strong effort to recover her wavering self-possession. "There is something oddly familiar to me in her countenance—in her eyes—her glance—her expression—"

She paused, a faintness seeming to sweep over her.

The Hungarian countess was a very beautiful woman, and her beauty was as striking as impressive.

She was tall, not stout nor yet slender, but of a grand and imperial presence, looking as if born to command. She was apparently about thirty years of age, and her lovely, half-haughty face had not yet lost its early primrose bloom. Her eyes were like glowing sapphires, and the shadow of some past sorrow lurked in their blue depths. In singular contrast to her fair and still youthful face was her hair, which, although abundant, was already gray. She wore it in heavy braids, with loose and fluffy curls above her broad forehead, and it gave singular effect to her charming loveliness.

She recovered herself almost immediately, exerting a stern self-control, but Sir Hugh could see that she trembled, and that she was scarcely able to stand. She resumed her seat almost immediately, and the others grouped themselves near her.

"Were you ever in Hungary, Miss Glint?" inquired the countess, in a firmer voice, her gaze lingering almost eagerly upon Honor's face. "Or in Vienna?"

"No, madam," replied Honor. "I left school only last midsummer, and I have travelled but little during my life. Papa took me to Alexandria with him last autumn, but I saw only the ports at which we stopped, with the exception of a few short excursions inland."

"Your papa—is he living?"

"Yes, madam. He is Captain Glint of the Mediterranean steamship 'Argus,'" said Honor as proudly as if the captain had been a Lord High Admiral of the Navy.

The Hungarian countess sighed, while Lady Thaxter dextrously guided the conversation into a different channel, upon whose smooth current all went pleasantly.

The hour before dinner was soon passed.

Sir Hugh gave his arm to Lady Rothsmere, conducting her to the dining-room, while Lady Thaxter and Honor walked together.

After dinner Sir Hugh returned with the ladies to the drawing-room, and spent the evening in their society.

Nothing of his own troubles or of Honor's was apparent in their looks or tones. Both were as cheerful and smiling as if their hearts were not aching with an unappeasable anguish and dread.

"I shall issue cards for a dinner party to be given next week," said Lady Thaxter, sitting before the fire with a feathered screen. "I am anxious that you should meet some of our finest governing minds, my Lady Rothsmere. As you have a taste for politics, I desire you to become acquainted with our Premier, and with some of our ablest peers. One of our grandest orators, and one whose speeches stir up all England now and then into a deep excitement, is Lord Waldemar. I especially desire you to know him."

"I have read some of his speeches," said Lady Rothsmere, her face kindling. "They are very fine and burn with the fire of earnestness. I have noticed them only of late years. I take the English papers, of course, with the Continental ones, and have read Lord Waldemar's speeches for four or five years."

"He only came into the peerage some five years ago," said Lady Thaxter. "He was a Yorkshire squire, when a chain of deaths broke the regular line of the Waldemar succession and made him baron. His family is Moor, I believe—oh, no, Darrel Moor is his nephew and heir, his own name is Floyd."

The pearl sticks of the Countess of Rothsmere's fan snapped suddenly apart and fell upon her garment velvet dress.

The countess uttered a strange exclamation, and bent forward, white as death.

Lady Thaxter was too well bred to show surprise, but at this second singular agitation of her guest during the evening she certainly must have wondered within herself.

"Dar—Darrel Moer did you say, Lady Thaxter?" inquired the countess, in a broken voice, and somewhat incoherently. "I—I believe my nerves are not very strong this evening. I have heard the name of Darrel Moer before."

"He is not Lord Waldemar," Lady Thaxter hastened to explain. "Lord Waldemar was a Squire Floyd, a wealthy Yorkshire gentleman, who came quite unexpectedly into the Waldemar title. Mr. Darrel Moer is his nephew and will succeed him. The baron was ill a month or two since, and went into Yorkshire for his health. I, Hugh, be kind enough to glance over the columns of the *Court Journal* upon the small table at your elbow, and see if there is not some mention of Lord Waldemar's expected return to town."

Sir Hugh complied with the request.

"Yes, there's an item here concerning Waldemar, and it may be of interest to Lady Rothsmere, especially as Mr. Moer's name is mentioned in it," he said, as calmly as if the utterance of Darrel Moer's name were not painful to him. "Allow me to read it:

"Lord Waldemar has been restored to his usual health by his sojourn in his native Yorkshire, and will return to town on Monday next to take part in the expected debate before the House next week."

"We learn that Mr. Darrel Moer, the long-reputed heir of Lord Waldemar, finds his claim to both title and estates set aside by the advent in England of Lord Waldemar's grand-daughter, a beautiful young lady of seventeen, the daughter of his lordship's only son. Miss Floyd has been educated abroad, and will, it is safe to predict, become a belle. She is to be presented, we understand, at the next drawing-room of Her Majesty."

A dead silence succeeded. Sir Hugh folded the paper presently and said:

"So Mr. Moer is no longer Lord Waldemar's heir? I fancy he will attempt to retrieve himself by a marriage with the heiress."

A faint cry came from Lady Thaxter. The Hungarian countess had fainted to insensibility. Her head fell back upon the cushions of her chair, and she looked like one dead.

Proper restoratives were applied, but it was many minutes before the countess came to herself, gasping for breath, and opening her eyes in a wild stare, that showed conclusively that she had received some sudden and terrible shock.

"My dear friend," said Lady Thaxter, in alarm, "you are ill. Will you allow me to send for a physician?"

"No—oh, no!" replied the countess, agitatedly. "I shall soon be myself again. Pray have no fears on my account."

There was the sound of an arrival at the house door.

Feeling unable to meet visitors at that moment, the countess arose. Sir Hugh, comprehending her desire for retirement, offered her his arm, and conducted her through an inner drawing-room into a cosy boudoir.

He was about to leave her to herself, but she motioned him to remain.

"I must apologize for my seeming weakness," she said. "I—I have not yet recovered from the fatigue of my journey. And this—the sudden news—"

She paused, unable to proceed.

"Pardon me, Lady Rothsmere," said Sir Hugh, speaking the words that had trembled upon his tongue for many minutes, "but what is Darrel Moer to you? What are you to Darrel Moer?"

The countess crested her beautiful head haughtily, and anger sparkled in her blue eyes.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "do you address such a question to me?"

"Pardon me, countess," cried Sir Hugh, not flinching. "I seem impertinent, but my happiness depends upon your answer—not mine alone, but that of the young girl who is now in the drawing-room."

"I do not understand."

"Allow me to explain. I am impelled to tell my story to you, Lady Rothsmere. I believe you may be able to help us. You have perhaps never visited England before, but you have known Darrel Moer. I remember that he has spent months at a time on the Continent, and that he was once away from England a whole year. Perhaps you knew him then?"

The countess's remarkable excitement at the mention of Darrel Moer's name had inspired Sir Hugh with a suspicion that hers had been no commonplace acquaintance with Moer—that she had

been one of his numerous loves, perhaps—and that she was acquainted with Moer's secret history better possibly than any other.

He did not see her face now, it being turned into the shadow. But her voice was still tremulous as she answered, reluctantly:

"I saw Mr. Moer at Baden Baden the year he was abroad, Sir Hugh. I must decline to be catechized farther until I know why you question me. May I ask what is Darrel Moer to you?"

"This, madam," cried Sir Hugh, with bitter emphasis—"he stands in my way to happiness—he blocks my path completely. I love Honor Glint—"

"I could see that," interposed the countess, softly, as his voice faltered, "and she loves you, Sir Hugh. That I also could see."

"It is true, Lady Rothsmere. Honor loves me, as I love her. But she is bound to Darrel Moer and we cannot marry."

"Why does she not break with him if she loves you?" asked the countess. "Will she perjure herself by marrying one, even if she is promised to him, if she loves another?"

"She is bound to him by no light promise, Lady Rothsmere, but by marriage vows."

"That child a wife! Impossible!"

"She is no wife," said Sir Hugh, "save that the words have been spoken over them that binds them together in an indissoluble tie. They separated at the very altar. Honor fled from him as from a pestilence. She will not live with him or bear his name. She loathes him—hates him!"

"Then why did she marry him?"

"Because Captain Glint's wife, who is not Honor's mother, was barbarously unkind to her, and Moer proposed to Honor when her sense of desolation was keenest. She liked him, and might have loved him in time. She married him, intending to be a good wife to him. But in the very vestry of the chapel where she stood after signing her name he revealed his wicked nature to her so completely that she fled from the church and from him in very terror. It was after that that I asked her to marry me and she learned that she loved me."

"It's a very strange affair," said the countess.

"Yes. I have consulted a lawyer, and find that Honor is bound to Moer while he lives. She cannot have her marriage annulled—she has no ground upon which to sue for divorce. My only hope is that Darrel Moer may have a wife living."

"What reason have you for such a hope?" asked the countess, almost in a whisper.

"None whatever beyond a general knowledge of Moer's nature. He is ardent and fickle, and reckless to a degree. He might have married in a moment of infatuation, and have a wife living somewhere now. I have often wondered why he did not marry. The reason may be that he is married already."

"But, if so, would not the marriage have been proclaimed?"

"Not if the match were likely to have been distasteful to his uncle, the present Lord Waldemar. His lordship is peculiar. He discarded his only son Wallace Floyd for a marriage with the daughter of a man with whom he had been at enmity, and Darrel may have taken warning at his cousin's fate. The young lady who was mentioned in that item in the *Journal* is the issue of Wallace Floyd's marriage. The question whether Darrel Moer has been married or not is one of absorbing interest to me, and involves my future happiness and welfare. If he has a wife still living, Honor's marriage to him is null and void. Can you lend me any assistance, countess, in my inquiry into Darrel Moer's past life? Can you tell me if Darrel Moer has ever been married?"

He asked the question as if his life depended upon the answer.

There was a short and deathly silence.

Then the Hungarian countess answered, in a low voice:

"I have reason to believe, Sir Hugh, that Darrel Moer has been married!"

Sir Hugh nearly leaped from his seat. His astonishment was as great as his relief. His suspicions had then pointed towards the truth. His instincts had guided him aright. His hopes strengthened, and he exclaimed:

"He has been married! Oh, Lady Rothsmere, is his wife still living?"

The countess hesitated.

Sir Hugh longed to see her face, but he could not.

"I cannot tell you that," she answered him, at last. "I am greatly interested in your story, Sir Hugh, and from my soul I pity you and Miss Glint. If I can help you I will do so. But you must give me a little time. Let me think over what you have said. I wish to meet Lord Waldemar, his grand-daughter, and—Darrel Moer. I shall not betray your confidence, Sir Hugh, and again I promise you my help."

She held out her hand to him as if to seal a compact.

The closing of the house door attested to the departure of the visitors, and when Sir Hugh had released her hand the countess arose and exclaiming herself returned to the drawing-room.

Sir Hugh lingered to digest the information he had received.

"The countess is the widow of a well-known Hungarian count," he mused. "Her history is well known, and without a shadow of mystery. It is plain that she has been one of the loves of Darrel Moer. She says he has been married. Can she have been his wife? Can a woman so good and beautiful as she have wedded Darrel Moer? It is possible. Honor was deceived by him. Did she marry the Hungarian count thinking Moer dead? And does she consequently fear to own to that early marriage because it must invalidate the latter one? I believe I have stumbled upon the truth. I believe that Lady Rothsmere is Darrel Moer's actual and lawful wife. And Honor's freedom must involve the ruin of the countess."

CHAPTER XXIV.

We must now return to Floyd Manor and continue the narration of the singular proceedings of Lord Waldemar's acknowledged heiress.

It will be remembered that the mansion had been closed for the night, the baron had retired to his library to write letters, and the manager had taken his leave.

It will also be remembered that Grimrod had passed around the angle of the dwelling, and had halted under the trees below Miss Floyd's windows, and while standing there had been startled by a bird-call near him.

This bird-call had emanated from the throat of a young man who was ensconced in the shrubbery near at hand, and had had the effect of bringing out upon the balcony of her parlour, into the chill March night, Miss Floyd herself.

The colloquy that had ensued between the lady upon the balcony, her form plainly defined against the light that filled her room, and the dusky figure upon the lawn had more than startled Grimrod—it had horrified him.

The familiarity of the stranger whom Miss Floyd had addressed as "Antonio" thrilled him with a terrible fear.

"What are they to each other?" he asked himself. "Clearly this is the unknown lover whose existence I suspected, but Henrietta Watchley denied. It is fortunate I came round here before going home. I am likely now to learn my young lady's whole history."

The idea did indeed seem probable. He waited for developments. They soon came.

The young man who had so successfully imitated the peculiar bird-call came up under Miss Floyd's windows, repeating his injunction to her to come down.

"I can't come," answered the girl, pantingly.

"How am I to leave the house unseen?"

"That's your look-out, Hilda," answered Antonio, and Grimrod noticed now that he spoke English with a foreign accent. "I don't care how you leave the house—only come! You dare not refuse when I command."

"We'll see about that," said the girl, more coolly. "I'm not coming downstairs, Antonio. Mrs. Watchley is always on the look-out, and her room is opposite mine. She's a perfect watch-dog. You can tell me what you have to say where you are."

"And have the old lord come popping out at me with a gun!" cried Antonio. "No, that won't do. If you don't come down to me, I'll come up to you."

"What! To my very room?"

"Yes, to your very room. You've sent your maid to bed, or you wouldn't be out there. Drop me a rope."

"I have no rope, and if I had I would not drop it for you. Keep your distance, Antonio."

The stranger laughed, amused perhaps at her threatening manner, and sprang forward and began to climb the ivy that covered a portion of the wall upon that side of the building, with the agility of a cat.

Miss Floyd still leaned over the balcony and watched him with dilated eyes.

Grimrod had been tempted to hurl himself upon the stranger and throttle him, but a sense of caution and a desire to probe the whole secret restrained him. He too watched Antonio with breathless eagerness.

The stranger climbed up to the balcony, but Hilda Floyd retreated before him into her rose parlour. She essayed to close the French windows upon her untimely visitor, but he pushed them open and followed her into her room.

Grimrod waited but a single moment for consideration, then he crept forward and began also to climb the ivy as swiftly and noiselessly as was possible.

The task was hard. He had not the supple limbs

of the younger man who had preceded him, and his hands were fearfully denuded of their skin when he slipped over the balcony railing and passed on the balcony itself, panting and trembling.

The window was slightly ajar, and the curtains hung loosely before it. Grimrod crouched close to the aperture and peeped into the room.

Hilda Floyd was standing up near the fire. Her looks and attitude betrayed intense alarm.

Her visitor had flung himself into a chair. He was a bold-faced, dashing sort of man, not young, and with a certain claim to good looks, but Grimrod's keen business eyes read his character as readily as if it had been stamped in legible letters upon his face. He was one of those adventurers who throng the Continental towns, as well as England, and who are popularly said to make their living "by their wits."

This particular adventurer was shabbily dressed, and seemed to have suffered from adverse fortunes.

"*A chevalier d'industrie!*" was Grimrod's decision. "What has the girl to do with a fellow of that stamp? What has he come here for?"

He was soon to be enlightened upon the latter point.

"When did you come to England, Antonio?" asked the girl, with desperation, turning upon him suddenly.

"I arrived at Dover this morning. I made all haste to England after you, Hilda. But you don't seem to appreciate my devotion. I travelled up to Yorkshire as fast as the train could bring me! I arrived all impatient, and it is thus you receive me. You are not much like the Hilda of Innsbruck."

"No, I am not the same Hilda," said the girl, with increasing sullenness. "I thought I loved you once, but I find I don't. The penniless charge of Mrs. Watchley might have fanned you, but how I can't see. But times have changed with me. I am not the grand-daughter of some obscure Yorkshire squire, as I once believed myself, and she tossed her head. 'I am the grand-daughter of Lord Waldemar, one of the richest peers in England, and I am to be his heiress and Baroness Waldemar at his death.'"

"Well, I know that years ago," said Antonio, with a smile.

"You know it years ago? Why, you have only known me for a year!" ejaculated the girl, in surprise.

"I know more about you than you think," said the stranger. "I know, and you know, that you are engaged to marry me. I have hurried on after you post-haste to claim the fulfilment of your promise."

Grimrod drew a breath of relief. He had begun to fear that the pair were already married.

"You'll have to wait a long while if you wait for me to marry you," said the girl, scornfully. "You don't know my grandfather. He would cast me off if I were to disgrace him by a marriage with you. How could I introduce you to him? You call yourself Antonio Frivoli, and lay claim to some sort of title, and pretend to have money, but I don't believe your pretences any longer. For aught I know, you may have escaped from the galleys."

The stranger's cheeks reddened with anger.

"I'll tell you who I am," he cried, recklessly, snarling upon Miss Floyd. "I am no titled personage; I am not rich; I am not even a gentleman. But I am your promised husband, and I have letters in your own handwriting calling me your betrothed. What will your proud, stern grandfather say to them if I show them to him? Will the fact that you hate me now, and that you are nobly born, compensate him for the publication of your ardent love-letters to me in the public papers? Will he not cast you off? By Jove, I'll make the blow out all the deeper by telling precisely who I am. What a headline that would make! 'Love-letters of Miss F—, grand-daughter of Lord W—, to an ex-courier, an ex-mate on a Mediterranean vessel, an ex-valet!'"

Miss Floyd gave a shriek of dismay.

"Have you been all these dreadful things?" she asked, in horror.

"I have," he replied, with malicious exultation. "My dear Hilda, it is so unpleasant to reflect that you have kissed an ex-valet, that you have called him your 'own one'! I'd like to see Lord Waldemar when he reads the letters, with a short biographical notice of their recipient attached."

"You will not dare do it! No paper will publish the letters."

"You'll see if there won't," said Frivoli, significantly. "Shall I try to find a publisher?"

The girl shuddered.

"No—no," she said. "Such a publication would ruin me with grandpapa. He is awfully proud, and I'm afraid of him. You know that I believed you to be my equal in rank, and though my letters are foolish and fond they are such as many a young girl writes to her promised husband. I am pure in thought and in deed, and grandpapa would know

that, but he would never overlook the miserable folly and weakness of loving a man like you. The very fact that you are capable of publishing those silly, childish letters shows what manner of man you are. I hate myself for ever having fancied you. You a gentleman! I must have been mad to have ever dreamed it."

Frivoli smiled meekly. He glanced around the chamber with appreciative eyes.

"The baron must be immensely rich," he observed. "What a luxurious nest this is! No doubt he would pay me a handsome sum for the letters if I were to offer to sell them to him."

"He might, but not more than I would pay," cried the girl, eagerly. "He would buy up the letters and send me off out of his sight. If he did not utterly disown me during his lifetime, he would put me in some strict school, or upon some country estate, and never allow me a glimpse of society. I will buy the letters. What will you take for them?"

"There are ten letters," said Frivoli, coolly. "I'll take a hundred pounds apiece."

"I haven't so much money. A thousand pounds. You might as well ask a million. How do you suppose I am to get a thousand pounds?"

"It is for you to find the way," returned Frivoli, with a mocking smile. "The money—or marriage!"

"Grandpapa has an excellent constitution and will live many years yet. He has the power to keep me out of every penny while he lives. He doomed my father and mother to poverty, and they died in a foreign land, and so far as I know, were buried in pauper's graves. He would treat me in a precisely similar manner."

Frivoli reflected. In his secret soul he was not anxious to ally himself to the stern old baron, whom he justly feared. And he knew that, even could he force Hilda Floyd to marry him, he would never profit in any manner by the marriage. He began to consider how much better it would be to leave the heiress in possession of all her grandeur and make of her his private gold-mine. If poor, she would be only a burden to him. If rich, she could keep him in money, so that he might lead the idle, luxurious life he loved.

"I daresay you are right, Hilda," he observed. "I certainly don't want a poor wife. I relinquish my claim upon your hand. You will of course want to buy the letters of me?"

"I have two hundred pounds. I'll give you that sum for them."

"That will pay for two. I can't sell them cheaper. They are unique, you know, the only letters of the kind that could possibly prove valuable to me. I will not abate my price!"

"I cannot get the eight hundred pounds additional which you exact," said Miss Floyd, after some anxious deliberation. "I'll take two of the letters, and buy the rest, one at a time, at stated intervals. Will that suit you?"

"Perfectly," returned Frivoli. "The letters are to be sold in the order of their dates."

Miss Floyd made some objection to this arrangement. The later letters were those she most desired to possess, but Frivoli was inflexible. She finally went to her desk and produced her pocket-book, and counted out the sum she had mentioned in crisp bank notes. They had been paid to her by Lord Waldemar's manager, as a portion of her annual allowance, and had been designed to purchase articles of dress which would be absolutely required should she enter society in London.

Grimrod was tempted to show himself at this juncture. The transfer of the money touched him in a tender point, but he possessed his soul in patience. There might be more to hear.

It was as well for him that he decided to wait.

Frivoli counted over the money after Miss Floyd, found the sum correct, and gave into her hands two of the letters she had written him months before.

She glanced them over, assuring herself that they were genuine, and burned them in the grate.

"I'll bring the other letters to you whenever I need money, Hilda," said Frivoli. "It's pleasant to have money in bank, and be able to draw it when one wishes. And now there's another little point I want to speak to you about. It is better to discuss it with you than with Lord Waldemar."

"What is it?"

"I was introduced to you at Innsbruck," remarked Frivoli, irrelevantly, it seemed, "by a lady whom Mrs. Watchley knew well and intimately. I became acquainted with the lady through boarding in the same house with her. This lady told me your history. Mrs. Watchley never hesitated to tell any one who took an interest in you that you were the grand-daughter of Squire Floyd. Mrs. Watchley claimed to have been your nurse. She said that she was a gentlewoman, reduced to take a menial position, but subsequently falling heir to a property she educated you for your future rank, depending upon your grandfather's munificence to reward her in

due time, or your own gratitude to her, in the event of your grandfather's refusing to acknowledge you or give you your rightful position during his lifetime."

"Well, what of this? It is all true."

"Not quite, my lady Hilda. I've been to Trieste. I have seen your parents' fellow-lodgers. Mr. Grimrod went over the same ground, but my report would vary somewhat from his."

Grimrod's inscrutable eyes were fixed in one burning glance upon Frivoli.

It was strange that the foreigner was not conscious of it.

"Well, what would your report be?" asked Hilda.

"I happened to be in Trieste when Mr. Grimrod came there," said Frivoli, "and the fact that he was hunting for a Hilda Floyd came to my ears. As I knew a Hilda Floyd, I naturally took an interest in his movements. I watched him, in fact, believing that he was searching for you. I visited the grave of Wallace Floyd, and also that of Mrs. Janet Floyd, who died in a public hospital, of quick consumption, as one of her fellow-lodgers reported to me when I asked him. Both Floyd and his wife suffered many privations, and both died from want of the actual necessities of life. Floyd's employer caused the pair to be buried side by side, and erected a neat stone, with their names and ages. But for him both would have been turned from their very graves before this, and other bodies would have been placed upon their bones. I should think the Baron of Waldemar would sleep well of nights when dreaming of those two neglected graves in Trieste. But it was not this I meant to say. I discovered in Trieste," and now Frivoli's eyes gleamed, "that the name of Mrs. Wallace Floyd's child's nurse was not Henrietta Watchley, but that it was Margaret Cropsey!"

The open window trembled, and the curtain fluttered. Miss Floyd smiled incredulously.

"It is true," said Frivoli, "and I can prove it. The same fellow-lodger of Mrs. Floyd who told me how the poor gentleman and lady wasted by turns, and died almost of starvation, told me also that the child's nurse of young Hilda Floyd was no gentlewoman, but only a faithful, kindly, ignorant nurse, who had been a servant all her life. She was threatened with illness when she went away from Trieste, taking the child with her, but was supposed to be trying to make her way with the child to England. She promised the dying Mrs. Floyd to convey the child to its grandfather. I traced her to Malta."

"It's false!" said Miss Floyd. "My nurse never went to Malta."

"Your nurse didn't. Hilda Floyd's nurse did, and took the child with her. I failed to get any trace of her at Malta, except that she had gone to an hotel, stricken with fever, and had been turned out into the street; the child still in her arms. The landlord feared she would drive away his boarders. I suppose. She was believed to have drowned herself in the delirium of the fever, but several vessels left Valetta that night, going in different directions, and it's possible she found passage in one of them, providing the captain did not suspect the existence of her fever. I believe that Margaret Cropsey went in one of those boats. I believe she is alive to-day also, and ignorant of the rights of which you are defrauding her."

"The real Hilda Floyd! Who then am I?"

"That question puzzles me," said Frivoli. "I know who you are not. I don't know who you are. But if you remain to the world Hilda Floyd you'll have to pension me off pretty handsomely, I can tell you. This secret is my fortune."

The French window was pushed open at this crisis, and Grimrod, tall, lank, dark and insatiable, a very Meghistopheles, stalked into the room!

(To be continued.)

GROWTH OF NAILS.—M. Dufour has made observations as to the rate of growth of the nails. Here are some of the results. The nails of the little fingers grow more slowly than those of the other fingers and the thumbs. The difference is about one-ninth. The mean rate of these (excluding the little fingers) is about one millimetre (100th part of an inch) in ten days. The rate of growth on the six longer fingers. There is little difference between the rates of growth in different animals. The nails grow at about the same rate on both hands. The rate of growth is not constant throughout the length of the nail; it is greater near the base. The rate of growth at the side parts is probably the same as in the middle part. The substance of the nail advances equally throughout its breadth. The rate of nail growth in an individual at intervals of several years shows sensible differences.

THE SEASON'S FRUIT.—One of the principal salesmen in the Grand View, Covent Garden Market, has stated that it is impossible to offer any

opinion as to the quantity of home-grown fruit this year, for it has been so scarce that throughout the whole season he has only seen about four dozen apricots, and other out-door fruits are proportionately scarce.

HOW SHE SAVED HIM.

SHE was just thirty, too old for a heroine if you fancy that all the love and romance has gone out of life by that time, but I think some of the best and noblest impulses, faiths and realizations come after the first flush of impatient, unreasoning youth.

In truth, Eleanor Kenneth's life appeared to have been turned round; the care and anxiety came first, and the ease and sweetness of youth later. She was the eldest of four girls, left with their mother on so scanty an income that it required much thought and perplexity to keep out of debt.

She was no genius as the world goes. She had a sweet, pathetic voice adapted only to ballad singing; she played a little, but invariably went astray on time; she had no faculty for teaching; she could not have written a book or painted a picture, or even sketched a design, but she was an admirable house-keeper. She could turn old dresses and make them nearly equal to new, trim bonnets or hats, and produce a dainty meal out of the most unpromising fragments; and, her mother's health being poor, she took charge of the family.

Clara, the second girl, was bright and pretty. They strained every nerve to educate her for a teacher. She succeeded admirably in her studies, and had a good prospect before her, when Aunt Denslowe, who had forgotten their existence for five years, dropped down upon them, demolished their plans in her aggressive, imperious fashion, took Clara away with her, and in three months had her engaged.

Clara was eighteen, well educated, pretty and poor; Mr. Gerard was forty, a widower with only one son, wealthy, gentlemanly, and extravagantly in love. Clara liked him very much. In six months they were married and went to Ireland, where Mr. Gerard's business lay.

Julia was tall, a brilliant brunette, and had a very fine voice.

Aunt Denslowe created quite an excitement with her, which gratified the lady's vanity very much, and when she was a few months past eighteen she married a young broker whose father was one of the solid City men.

Eleanor now found quite a difference with her income and her time. She could be more devoted to her mother and indulge in the luxury of a servant.

They drifted into the belief that Aunt Denslowe would be fairy godmother for the third time, and so it proved, for little Kate was brought up a lady.

Her strong point was pretty, captivating blonde innocence, and, like Julia, she married young and married well.

Eleanor began to look forward to long years of quiet spent with her mother.

Aunt Denslowe had decided that she was not of the marrying kind, and Eleanor thought so herself, with a little pain, perhaps, but no mortification. She could be useful and happy, and, if she missed some of the joys, she might also escape some of the cares and sorrows.

Her quiet life came to a sudden end, however.

First her mother was taken ill and died. Mrs. Kenneth's income ended with her life, but the homestead she left unconditionally to Eleanor. On account of a new railroad it suddenly acquired additional value. Then Aunt Denslowe died and left her quite a fortune. Julia's husband invested it advantageously, and Eleanor went to Ireland to spend some time with Mrs. Gerard.

So now she was thirty, mistress of some six thousand pounds, handsomer than she had been at twenty, and with a certain style that might have made her very fascinating had she chosen. Then she looked remarkably young; in fact, the fashionable world took her to be the youngest of the family.

On her return from Ireland, instead of spending the summer at Brighton with her sister Julia, she had chosen a craggy, out-of-the-way seaside resort known as Tower Point, some one having built a tower on the highest part of the cliff. Mr. and Mrs. Alcott, who kept the main hotel, were old friends of her mother's. There was likely to be a good deal of comfort, interest and delightful inattention, and she was getting tired of fashionable life.

She had been there a week perhaps when Gordon Palmer first saw her. It was just in the edge of the summer twilight. There was a long parlour at the hotel, and another apartment across the end commonly called the music-room. She sat at the piano, some sort of filmy garment flowing around her like a cloud, her soft light-brown hair gathered in a knot behind with two or three stray curls, her clear-cut face pale. A high-bred as it always was. Her eyes

were so dark a blue that every one supposed them black, and they held in them an unconscious shade of sadness.

He was passing the window which opened on the balcony. There was a light just behind her in the chandelier which threw her out in boldest relief. She was playing slowly and singing Kingsley's "Three Fishers." The first line he heard was:

"For men must work and women must weep;" and it struck a sore chord in his soul, something that hung ever him like a shadow. If it had been anything else he would have passed on to the hall without a second thought. It was strange that just these few words should make their lives cross at an unsuspected angle and open a world to both that neither had thought of before.

He listened until the last sound died away, and her hands fell idly into her lap. Then he rushed up to his room, changed his dress, ran down again, and made a few inquiries.

"You are a pretty fellow to think of women the first thing," exclaimed Dick Basset. "Can't you live without a flirtation? An engaged man too!"

He coloured warmly, almost angrily.

"I do not know that a flirtation must necessarily follow the question as to whether there are any ladies in the house," he retorted.

"None to care about," said another. "Three commonplace girls, two widows past forty, and three or four sober married people. Now at Holman's there is quite a crowd, and no lack of fun."

"I've been at Holman's three days," said Palmer, "and had a miserable little hole in which I was almost stifled. I came here for quiet and comfort."

"Good boy. It is safest to keep out of temptation."

Palmer fell into a musing mood. The singer was one of the married women, of course. Not that it made a bit of difference to him. He was not given to flirting, though Basset always rallied him about it. Basset started off bright and early the next morning on a shooting expedition.

Palmer was down late in breakfast.

Eleanor had been having a breezy ramble over the hills that had brought a tint of pink to her cheeks.

He sat down opposite her, and they glanced rather sharply at each other. He recognized her at once.

Mrs. Alcott poured out coffee for them. There seemed to be a little awkwardness by-and-by, so she said:

"Mr. Palmer, this is my friend Miss Kenneth; Mr. Palmer, Eleanor."

Probably sooner or later some one would have introduced them had not that amiable office been performed by Mrs. Alcott.

Palmer was very gentlemanly and agreeable; a first-rate fellow everybody declared. Women liked him very much too. He could always talk, and he gave to his beliefs, emotions and feelings a peculiar energy and personal influence.

You could distinguish him in a group of young men, whose characteristics would all be pretty much alike. He was not noticeably handsome, but strong, energetic, earnest, with no weak or morbid lines about his face.

Perhaps he was no better than dozens of men who did not appear to have half his stamina or truth, but he did carry with him a something that impressed people strongly.

That evening Miss Kenneth walked down to the beach with him to view the effects of a magnificent sunset.

She had conversed with a good many gentlemen during the last few years, and was ready as well as entertaining.

These two people brought out their souls and compared them, talked over the kind of lives that they had and trust, the stray bits in books that they liked, little poems that both had remembered for the sake of a verse, and discovered that their tastes were wonderfully alike.

That evening he asked her to sing.

"I do not sing in public, Mr. Palmer," she made answer. "I have only a very ordinary voice, and on that account it has had no unusual cultivation. There are so many charming singers in the world."

"I heard you last evening. I was sufficiently ill-bred to listen and to look. You made a picture that I shall never forget. If I were an artist I should be eager to give it to the world. As it is I am content that it should hang in memory's halls."

Eleanor could not help liking that.

His manner was exceedingly respectful. If he had been familiar it would have aroused a suspicion at once.

As she never had been in love she fancied that she never should be. There was some fatal lack in her nature, she said to herself, some hope or enthusiasm lost with youth. And, being strictly conscientious, she had no desire to awaken in any man's heart a feeling to which she could not respond.

But this friendliness threw her off her guard; or rather she fell into a sad mistake, confusing friendship with love.

"Well," he went on, beseechingly, "do you intend to refuse me?"

She had been thinking, weighing this and that in her mind, and had almost forgotten his request. Now she smiled a little. She had a really beautiful smile, and, seeing it, Gordon Palmer felt as if he would like to clasp her in his arms and kiss her.

"I am not going to be coaxed," she replied. "The performance will not be worth it. And if you should not feel satisfied you must never ask me to sing again."

After she had once begun he kept her busy. It was moonlight, and most of the others had gone to walk on the beach. So between the songs they discussed the old subjects of love and sorrow, and came to the conclusion that commonplace people were the most fortunate.

"Yet I cannot help thinking that it would be worth half of one's life to have a magnificent, overwhelming love in it. I wonder if that went out with Arthur's knights," she said.

"I suppose we do live in more prosaic times."

With that Eleanor paused to think of her sisters. Not one of them had been madly, enthusiastically in love. They enjoyed a reasonable degree of happiness, and would go through life comfortably.

"There is very little love that would stand any test or strain. Why, I can count up hosts of broken engagements," he said.

"Perhaps a little heart-break then is better than a great deal of heart-break afterwards."

"I am not sure that I believe in broken hearts, Miss Kenneth."

For it came into his mind that if anything should happen between him and Rosamond Archer the changeful tide would soon wash away the sign of what had been.

For an instant he was tempted to confess, and then it seemed foolish to make an acquaintance of twenty-four hours his confidant.

The next day Basset and Carleton returned.

There were several invitations to go down to Holman's, some sailing parties and horseback rides, and somehow Eleanor felt herself drawn within the circle. She was fond of companionship, and she came to be quite a favourite. The young girls liked her immensely because she neither danced nor sang, nor set herself up to rival them, though they felt that she had the power to do it.

Palmer paid her no exclusive attention, yet there was never a day in which they did not have a little talk or a ramble to themselves.

He soon learned her habits and her haunts, and came upon her now and then with the most cordial friendliness.

So passed a fortnight.

He received two letters one morning that equally perplexed him. One was a business matter in which he had unfortunately staked everything, and there was a rumour in the air that the venture might not terminate successfully. Failure had never occurred to him before. He was making haste to get rich, and so far had been quite fortunate.

The other was from Rosamond Archer. She and her aunt would be going to France for the rest of the summer. Of course he would come. She was longing to see him.

His engagement with Rosamond had come about like so many other engagements. Some operas and concerts, a good deal of dancing at evening parties, some slight management on the aunt's part and a sudden sweet betrayal on Rosamond's.

For a week he fancied himself in a heaven of love, and then some way they drifted back to commonplace.

She was a bright, pretty, clever girl, just as fond of dancing and gaiety as before in fact—no whit changed. He fancied that love was to ennoble and render sacred all his future life; instead Rosamond planned out the kind of house she wanted, the horses they must keep, the dainty little parties and dinners she meant to give. It would take a good deal of money, and he went to work manfully.

In the autumn they were to be married. He was growing into a plain, sharp, common-sense business man, and began to wink at transactions that he had once held himself immeasurably above. Other men did them, and were considered none the worse. It was a hot, eager, unscrupulous race, where you pushed aside or overboard the weak. If he had not met Eleanor Kenneth conscience would have grown less and less acute.

But now he felt troubled. He had been risking some money that he had no right to—me. He must go to London and borrow enough to replace it, to be ready in case of an emergency. But two of his best friends were away. Whom could he count on to stand by him at this trying time?



[FOUND IN THE WOOD.]

Suppose he went to Rosamond and her aunt and said:

"I am in a great strait. I must have three thousand pounds in a week's time, or perhaps go to ruin. Do you love me well enough to befriended me?"

Thereat he smiled scornfully.

Truly he should do no such thing. But what a tender, loyal love it would be to which one could go in doubt or sorrow, or even sin! Was there any such in this world?

The mail that night would bring him another letter. Then he must take a quick, decisive step. There was some way out of it all, and he did not mean to go down with unclean hands.

Basset was going out with his gun, and bantered him to join the expedition. He had this day's grace, though it was like walking on the edge of a burning volcano. He must know first what he had to do before he took a step.

In the upper hall he met Eleanor Kenneth.

She looked so simply and severely noble standing there, the impersonation of a better and purer womanhood than the common society type. If he were quite free he thought.

He turned scarlet at the idea. At heart he was a loyal man. He had made his choice and would abide by it, unless fate intervened and pushed him down to social perdition, where he would not be worthy of any woman's love.

"Oh," she said, "are you engaged? It would be a fine morning for Crugnest."

He had asked her to go with him some time. Why not take this day? It would be the last sweet, and ramble with her. Was he strong enough to dare so much peril—alone with her, listening to the cool, sweet voice, watching the slow-moving eyes that had come to have a fascination for him, and talking as they always did?

A strange tremor ran through his veins, and he turned pale.

"I have promised the day to Basset," he said, hesitatingly.

She felt a little disappointed, so she made an effort.

"I am not going to persuade you to break your promise," she answered, with a smile.

"You could do it easily, but it would not be well for either of us," he returned, hoarsely.

Then he went on and left her by the window, where she stood for many minutes stunned and surprised, as much at his strange behaviour as his words.

After the manner of women, she straightway began to torture herself. Had she done or said aught that would lead him to suppose that she had any designs?—she would not admit even now the possibility of love. With that she grew regally scornful, went to her room, and sewed industriously all the morning.

It was an unusually quiet day, but she was restless in the extreme.

The effort she made to confine her thoughts in one channel tired and confused her. At the sound of a step it seemed as if some one was coming with a message for her. Every nerve was roused to an electric state with some sense of sudden and vital change or evil. She seemed to shrink from an unseen ordeal which she knew that she must face.

Are there presentiments? She fancied she ran away to escape what was coming. She would take a long walk and have tea in her own room. For an hour or so in the evening she could read.

So she put on her wide leghorn hat with its drooping black plume, threw a scarf over her shoulders, and walked rapidly to one of her favourite haunts, a little nook made by a great craggy rock and a group of gnarled trees. Sometimes a bird perched itself on the topmost branch and sang, but to-day a deathly stillness pervaded the air.

What was that? Something flung in a heap, a

human form—a familiar garb. Good Heaven! Gordon Palmer, with half-closed eyes and ashen face! There was fresh blood upon his head, and for an instant she reeled and caught hold of a branch near by. Was he dead?

She crawled to him at length, felt for the pulse and found none, and then uttered a wild cry. If there was any hope it must be in instant assistance. Could her trembling limbs carry her back to the hotel?

She reached it looking like a ghost, and it was well that Mrs. Alcott was able to understand her incoherent story. Indeed, her usual calm self-possession appeared to have deserted her entirely.

A party of men were despatched immediately, while two servants were sent in different directions for a surgeon.

Eleanor flung herself on the steps of the veranda porch and waited in breathless anguish.

It seemed so terrible to go out of life without one familiar glance or word, alone there in the midst of fearful suffering. If he had not gone! Where were the rest of the party?

The men returned after what appeared to her an interminable while, carefully bearing the body on a litter.

"I am sure he is not dead!" Mrs. Alcott said, cheerfully. "It's an ugly wound, but it must have been an accident. He never could have shot himself. Has no one found a doctor? Every moment is precious for he has almost bled to death!"

Doctor Jaynes came flying along in his old-fashioned gig. The men bore their burden within doors, and the physician began his task. Before it was completed Basset and his companion returned, to be shocked and surprised at the tidings.

"He left us at three," Basset said. "We had very poor luck, but somehow I thought he seemed rather blue all day, and he is usually so cheerful. But he never would have done such a thing purposely, even if he had been in trouble of any kind. No, it must have been an accident."

Eleanor was startled at the idea.

And there was his strange conduct of the morning—but no, she would not believe anything so horrible. He was a man to fight his way out of any difficulty rather than to commit such a cowardly deed.

The place was full of excitement. Every one lingered to hear the physician's fiat.

It came at length.

Mr. Palmer was not dead, neither was the wound necessarily dangerous, but the loss of blood had weakened him seriously.

For some days he would be in a very critical state.

After that Eleanor went to her room. She felt miserably weak, and trembled in every limb and in every nerve. She bathed her face, but would not change her dress or even smooth her hair, for she wanted no supper, and would not go down again that evening.

Several letters lay on her dressing-table. She took up the largest one without glancing at the address, and tore open the envelope.

From her brother-in-law of course, he was her only business correspondent. She glanced it over mechanically, growing more and more surprised, and then amazed at its strangeness.

Then she took a look at the heading:

"Dear friend—"

But what was this about being on the verge of ruin? She turned over the envelope and there saw:

"Gordon Palmer, Esq."

It was not hers at all. A flush of scarlet stained her face. She had learned something that she would have given worlds not to know.

The letter had carelessly enough been brought in among hers, but she could not have made a mistake in a calmer mood.

It was a matter almost of life and death. From the few lines she had unwittingly read she felt that he ought to know the contents immediately. And yet he was in no state to understand their import. What a cruel strait to be in, and how hard for her to know his secret.

Eleanor did not ask herself why she felt so strong an interest in Gordon Palmer. She supposed it mere natural sympathy for some one she admired and liked, who was now overwhelmed by misfortune. But she did not sleep that night, and her first inquiry in the morning was concerning him. He had rested a little; was conscious, and had recognized several of his friends.

She wrote on a card:

"When you are able to converse five minutes I wish to see you on some business of importance. ELEANOR KENNETH."

This she sent by the servant.

Dr. Jaynes came over early, and was delighted with the improvement in his patient.

"We shall soon have him well," he declared, hopefully. "He has a splendid constitution."

Miss Kenneth made a pretence of taking her breakfast, but she felt ill and frightened. One moment she shivered with the cold, and the next her very breath seemed to scorch her tremulous lips. When the summons came for her she could scarcely walk.

"He insists upon seeing you alone," said Mrs. Alcott. "Please be careful, and do not excite him. Of course he owes his life to you."

With that she looked hard at Eleanor. Was there anything like love between these two people?

"I had not thought of that at all," Eleanor said, absently. "Some one else would doubtless have found him."

Then she entered the room. He was deadly pale, but the old, sweet, earnest look was in the face, and as he moved his eyes she discovered something that she had never seen before, something that stirred every pulse, something too that he did not mean to have there.

"I am glad you are better," she began, confusedly. "In the excitement last evening I carelessly opened a letter belonging to you, as it was among mine, and I wish to apologize and restore it. I was expecting to hear from my brother-in-law upon some business, or I should not have been so stupid."

He took the letter, and with a great effort opened it. The pallor of his face appeared to grow more marked, and his features sharpened with a struggle like that of death, and at first she thought he would faint.

"Oh, what can I do?" she cried, in distress. "Nothing. Do not be so terrified, Miss Kenneth. I think I shall have a giant's strength up to the last moment, and I couldn't pain you by dying here before your eyes. Though under ordinary circumstances a man ought to be grateful to a woman who has snatched him from death—still I am not sure but that death would have been the best thing for me. I am reaping the result of my own folly."

"You are in some trouble."

"Yes, but a good and honourable woman like you would be shocked by the story—a common enough one too; perhaps the most sensible thing now for me to do would be to tear off these bandages quietly and drift out of the world. For if I live it is ruin, disgrace—worse mayhap."

She came a step nearer.

"You did not mean to take your life yesterday?" she asked, with a nameless terror in her voice.

"Oh, no. Don't think me so weak. Besides, I was not sure it would be so bad then. I ought not to have gone, but—it seemed the less of two evils. I did not dare trust myself here with you, and if I remained I could not stay away from you. Miss Kenneth, let me confess the sum of my villainies. I am engaged to a girl who I have every reason to believe loves me. For her sake I was making haste to be rich. I have used some money confided to my care, and lost it. I have met with a woman who could be the ideal of any honest and honourable man's life and love. She has given no encouragement by word or deed that she could care for me, but through her I have learned how tender and absorbing a passion might enter a man's soul and revivify it. So here I tell her the truth, that she may despise me, as I deserve. All this you see is the bitter sting in the sweet knowledge that you have saved my life."

He was quite exhausted then, and turned his face over on the pillow. She seemed to be perfectly automatic in the first moments following his confession, not taking in the full sense of anything.

"Have you no friends?"

"There is not a man in the world to whom I could confide this horrible business. I might have borrowed the money and replaced it, but when one has always been considered honourable—" He paused, and the scornful intonation in his weak voice died away ere he resumed—"So you see it is best for me to make a finish of this little thing we call life. I am not sure but that I could die quite easily."

He looked as if he might. His eyes were growing glassy and sunken, and his lips were as colourless as his brow.

"If this money were replaced—" "But it cannot be now. It is my punishment for sin. It looked so plausible then—"

His voice sank away to a whisper. A slight tremor ran over him, and then all was still.

Eleanor applied the nearest restorative, and afterwards summoned Mrs. Alcott.

"Oh, Eleanor, how could you? I was afraid of this! The doctor said all depended upon his being kept quiet and free from excitement."

Eleanor Kenneth answered not a word. She seemed to be in a maze whichever way she turned. Standing there so white and still seemed to annoy Mrs. Alcott, so she turned and went out of the room.

The fact that Mr. Palmer did or could have loved her had very little weight with her then. After confessing all these sins and weaknesses he had fallen

far below her ideal. Yet she experienced a profound pity for him.

She had picked up the fatal letter, and still held it in her hand. Now she read it thoroughly. As far as she could understand the case, there was urgent and immediate need for three thousand pounds, the money held in trust. Gordon Palmer had used it for private speculation.

After all, what was it to her? They were the simplest of summer friends. Were they? She looked closely into her own heart. If she were a man she would not hesitate to save him. For ever afterwards they would be friends.

She had begun to experience the narrowness and loneliness of her own life, and was longing to do something that would take her beyond the every-day round, give her a warm and vital interest in her fellow creatures.

But this would yield no such fruits. His allegiance was to another woman. If he wavered here for her sake, might he not some time waver elsewhere for another's sake?

Yet it would be so very easy to save him.

The knowledge and desire grew upon her, as well as the peculiar craving for something strange and new. If she rescued this soul now it might never yield to temptation in the years to come.

But it would be for another woman's pleasure and happiness—to see other lips quaffing the delicious draught and basking in the sunshine of prosperity! Then she thrust aside the jealous pain. If there was any grace or virtue or nobleness in the deed why should she let a petty resentment stand in her way?

By noon she had decided. That he might die and she be greatly the loser thereby never once entered her mind. In fact she only thought of the ruin and disgrace that would meet him on the threshold of returning health.

Mrs. Alcott made no demur and asked no questions. She thought it quite as well that Eleanor should be out of the way for a day or two.

Eleanor was glad to find her brother-in-law, Mr. Gale, absent from town. She drew on him for three thousand pounds, and deposited it in a bank subject to Gordon Palmer's order. It was, after all, such an easy thing to do.

For the next ten days Palmer hovered between life and death. He was delirious most of the time, but so incoherent it mattered little what he said.

When Mrs. Alcott was wearied out Eleanor took her place and won golden encomiums. She was cool and calm and steady enough now.

Rosamond Archer was sent for through Dick Basset's intervention. He was surprised to find that Eleanor knew of his friend's engagement.

Mr. Basset came to her with an anxious face one morning.

There was some trouble in Palmer's money affairs.

"It is a mistake, I know, for I'd stake my very soul on Palmer's honesty. He couldn't do a mean or questionable thing. Only there ought to be a large sum of money—hang it! if I had three thousand of my own there should not be another word said. No one would dare hint it now if he was not lying on his back with not as much sense as a kitten."

She had much ado to keep the scarlet out of her face and the sudden tremor from her voice.

"Have you looked through all his papers?" she asked.

"All the important ones, I think."

"I laid a little parcel in that small drawer. Mrs. Alcott has the key. It was a day or two after the accident."

Mrs. Alcott had mislaid the key, and there was a great search for one that would fit.

There were some of Miss Archer's letters, business memoranda, and the receipt book of the deposit.

"Good! I knew he had everything all right," said the delighted fellow. "I shall take it upon myself to go straight to London and stop this abominable suspicion. The parties can have their money at a moment's notice."

Eleanor made no reply.

Basset was off with the next train.

Rosamond Archer came that day, a lovely, petite, graceful girl with curls like floss silk and a voice sweet as a bird.

Eleanor did not wonder that Palmer had been enchanted.

These were the women who always carried men captive.

Then there was a great difference between eighteen and thirty, she admitted with a sigh.

The message had followed Miss Archer from place to place, the delay nearly driving her frantic. Her despair and sorrow that refused comfort roused every one's sympathy. Her whole soul seemed to be centered in Gordon Palmer's life. Every one was interested in her immediately.

Flowers, luxuries and delicacies of all kinds were showered upon these two, who gave the hotel such an air of romance.

Eleanor Kenneth did not take cordially to her rival.

Perhaps that was not in woman's nature. Her presence was necessary in the sick-room, for though Rosamond could arrange flowers to perfection, and bend over her lover in speechless grief, she had no taste for the small, tiresome details. She fanned him ten minutes, Eleanor by the hour; she grew tired of the enforced quiet and solitude, and accepted invitations to ride or to walk, for her aunt was very solicitous about her health.

Eleanor grew a little paler and thinner, but no one remarked it—in fact, all the rest were half infatuated about Miss Archer.

One day Basset had taken her out to drive, and Palmer and Miss Kenneth were alone. He was beginning to sit up, and had been reading some letters from London. What between these and his friend's confused accounts he was beginning to suspect the truth. He had been miraculously saved.

He watched her now, and noted what the rest had failed to see.

She was looking tired and sad.

"Miss Kenneth," he began, in a weak, quavering voice, "I do not know how to thank you for your friendship. Such things look possible in books, but one rarely finds them outside of romance."

"If you are satisfied to live and to make the best of life, it will be a sufficient reward to me."

"I have thought of it a good deal lying here. I mean, Heaven helping me, to go back to my faith of five years ago, even if I take with it poverty. For then I was an honourable man, Miss Kenneth. If I could have met you then!"

"Perhaps it is better now. You needed a friend."

"Such a one as you have been. Say an angel, rather. I am not worthy to worship you in silence, I can guess that you have been my benefactor. I felt at first that I could not accept salvation and a fair name through a woman who must always despise me."

"Hush, do not speak of it. You would take it from any other friend."

"It is done, and I cannot help myself. There were three thousand pounds to my account at the bank. I want to give you a note for it now. Principal and interest shall be paid, if my life be spared, before I indulge myself in one wish or desire."

"Do not make it too much of a burden," she said, smiling.

"In my desk there you will find some paper. I cannot rest until the matter is properly arranged. For the rest nothing on earth could repay you."

When she saw how earnest he was she brought him the pen and paper.

"The kindness comes down to a very commonplace basis," she said, quietly. "It is merely an exchange of securities—so much money for so many years at so much interest."

"But remember when and how you did it. I might have died."

"I felt sure that you would not. I did not suppose I was running any risk. You see I am a sharp business woman after all."

He would not smile.

Presently he turned away his head that she might not see the slow-dropping tears, but, woman-like, she knew they were there. Indeed she felt like crying herself.

She would have liked to bury her face on the pillow beside his, for she felt weak and foolish as the veriest girl.

"I think you will never regret your good work," he said, at length.

And then there was a long silence.

A week later there was a general dispersion at Tower Point. Vacations were over, and summer was drawing to a close.

The men returned to business, the women to put their houses in order.

Palmer went to London, though he was hardly able, while Rosamond and her aunt started afresh on their French tour.

Eleanor rejoined her sister in October. She had been there hardly a week when Gordon Palmer called on her.

"I have been settling up my business," he explained, "and find myself really better off than I expected. So I have brought you a cheque for five hundred. I am going on a business journey and shall not be back before March."

"But your marriage?" she said, in astonishment.

"It has been put off for a year. I must get out of debt first, so it may be longer. But Rosamond was sweet as an angel, and willing to wait."

Both saw the gulf between them. There was no bridging it over.

"I can only wish you success," she said.

"Courage and truth and manliness may achieve it! We pride ourselves upon our strength, but it is not as all-powerful as we imagine. I mean that you shall never be ashamed of having saved me."

Eleanor confessed, honestly enough to herself, that night, that she cared more for this man than any one she had ever met. Looking over the events now, it seemed strange that she should go to Tower Point to find this unusual episode, and come so near to falling in love with a man whose allegiance had been given elsewhere. She fought bravely against the inclination, and tried to feel interested in her sister's gaieties.

Miss Archer came back at midwinter and made a little dazzle in society, attaching herself oddly enough to Eleanor. She lived to talk of Gordon Palmer.

Her aunt thought it queer and eccentricity of him to give up his business and start off in such a sudden fashion, but Rosamond had all faith in him.

Why had fate brought these two together? They were unlike in so many respects, and where Palmer was weakest Rosamond would never have any strength to give him. Indeed, she could not use that he needed any.

Not that he was likely ever to go astray again. He was not the kind of man turned two leaves.

Sometimes Eleanor wondered what Rosamond would have done under similar circumstances. She was quite a rich woman, and would be her aunt's heir, as that lady freely admitted. She found out one day. A gentleman, whose character had hitherto been irreproachable, had yielded to the momentary madness of temptation.

"It is the one thing that I could not forgive," Rosamond declared, with energy. "To think of a person for whom you have cared being a—thief! for it is that. If I were Mrs. Lambert I could never love him again, never!"

"I think she was very noble to give up her private fortune in order to settle the claim as far as she could," Eleanor replied, softly.

"I think it very foolish. I should have kept my money for myself and my children. If he was weak enough to sin he should pay the penalty."

The pretty face settled into hard lines.

Not; Gordon Palmer would not have had a merciful judge in her.

Palmer returned in the spring. He had been very successful, and added another five hundred toward the payment of his debt, realising, with a pain at his heart, how slow the work must be.

There was a little talk of marriage, and he told Rosamond as much of the truth as it was necessary for her to know, and offered her her freedom, since it must be some time before he would be able to marry.

"It is very sensible in him," said Mrs. Willis when she heard it. "And, Rosamond, I should take him at his word. He certainly has grown queer about some things. Mr. Cummings said there was no need of his giving up his business, as he did a year ago, and taking a position not higher than a clerkship. You can do so much better."

Rosamond had loved him very much, she thought. But if he was going to give up his ambition, and his prospects of being rich, for the sake of a few whims, perhaps it would be as well for her to exercise a little judgment.

And when, a month later, she had a very advantageous offer, she sent back her diamond engagement ring.

"The end of a woman's love," Palmer said to himself, with a little sigh.

For her sake he had been mad enough to sin, to risk the reputation of years. She would never know it, to be sure—the knowledge might have made her more tender—but he had no mind to run the risk.

He knew of only one woman grand enough to forgive it.

Eleanor heard of the rupture and Rosamond's speedy marriage. She was disappointed in that Palmer neither wrote nor came. Daily she asked herself what she was hoping for. Already she had refused a wealthy suitor, to her sister's chagrin. It was not then that she cared particularly about marriage, but she was becoming quite a favourite with society, growing younger and prettier every day.

An unlooked-for incident recalled Palmer. An uncle died and left him a thousand pounds. He heard that Miss Kenneth had gone to Tower Point, and followed her thither.

It was a cool evening late in August.

A fire of logs was blazing on the hearth of the music-room, and diffused a subtle fragrance as well as warmth. Nearly every one had left the house, as the season had come to a sudden and chilly ending.

The summer had been rather gay, so she wanted to finish it with a week or two of quiet.

Palmer arrived quite late. He snatched a hurried supper.

"How surprised Miss Kenneth will be to see you," Mrs. Alcott said. "We were talking of you this afternoon, and the accident when you were here before."

So she did not forget him then.

"It seems only yesterday," he returned, "and yet a great deal has happened since. Has she gone to her room?" he asked as he rose from the table.

"I think not. I heard the piano a few moments ago."

He passed through the hall, tapped lightly at the door, then entered. Eleanor was standing in front of the fire, tall, stately, yet gracious, looking so simply sweet that he realized how incomplete his life was without her.

But he had no right to sentiment then, or ever. In her heart no doubt she despised him.

She broke the awkward spell with a little commonplace talk, and presently he told his errand.

"I might have guessed," she said, rather sadly he thought. Then with sudden vehemence she added, "I wish this business between us was at an end."

"Heaven knows I wish so too. Are you repeating your good deed?"

Her face was scarlet.

"I did not mean that," she returned, slowly. "Only it seems as if there ought to be something better in the world, in one's thoughts, than money."

He smiled rather bitterly.

"Let us get over the unpleasantness as soon as possible," she said, in a fashion quite new to her, for she was usually so calm.

With that she brought her portfolio. He began to tell her of his good fortune, wrote a little, glancing up between the words. If she ever could have cared for him—if he could go back to the old summer, but then he was bound. Everything went awry in this world, he believed.

She took the old note and the new one, twisted them nervously in her fingers, tore them up presently, and threw them in the blaze.

He was watching her as the colour came and went in her face.

"Oh, what have you done?"

She knew then, and gave an embarrassed laugh. It was foolish and useless, but she felt that she loved this man, and with it came the consciousness that he loved her.

"I can soon remedy it," and he reached for the pen.

"Oh," she declared, vehemently; "it is like wringing your heart's blood out, drop by drop! It is taking the best years of your life. When it is ended you will hate me for laying such a burden upon you, if you do not before."

"Hate you, Miss Kenneth! If I dared I should go down on my knees in this very place and worship you as an angel! If I were a free man, and if you could forget—"

To come so near to happiness, and then find this hateful bar between! She turned impatiently, her face scarlet, her lips quivering.

"I don't want to ask for the hope. If you never smile upon me again, if you forbade me your presence, Heaven knows that I should be honest and upright to my latest moment. That would be your reward for having reached out your hand to save one human soul. I must love you always, for ever."

Of course propriety demanded that she must wait and keep silence—the whole world would be shocked at any other proceeding. So she must shut herself out of years of happiness as a reward for that one generous impulse. The fire seemed to flicker before her, the lights grew dim, and she stretched forth her hands.

Palmer seized them and covered them with kisses, came nearer and took her in his arms. I think neither could have told just what was said, but they felt that they belonged to one another, and that their secret would be one of the tenderest of bonds to bind them together.

Mrs. Gale was very much surprised.

"But Palmer is a splendid business man," said her husband, "though with a few queer crochets in his brain. We will soon have him on the high road to fortune again."

But to both Palmer and Eleanor there seemed a higher and truer purpose to life than mere money getting. She had saved him in the best sense of the word, and was never to be ashamed of her work.

A. M. D.

"BRITANNY BUTTER."—The appointment has been made in Paris of butter inspectors at the octroi and halles, apparently for the purpose of putting a stop to a kind of adulteration which has been discovered in England as well as France. Butters are now largely manufactured in Paris with flour, sugar, lard, and unwholesome colouring matters, and, having been packed in little square jars and baskets, it is sent to

the suburbs to be sent back again to Paris. In passing through the octroi the greasy compound is stamped, "Britannia Butter," and it is afterwards purchased at from two to three francs a pound.

FACTS.

A SUGGESTIVE SOUND.

Small Boy (at play with pop-gun, to sensitive Elderly Gentleman): "Does this noise annoy you, uncle?"

Elderly Gentleman: "No, my boy. It sounds like the pop of a cork!"—Punch.

"THERE'S WANT A THIN WORD," ETC.

Importunate and Persistent Fantho: "Here you are, sir, come along; not like a donkey, sir? Ask your young cousin if she don't like one, and I'll show she's going to have one, too, ain't yer, miss?" [N.B., Angelina is engaged to Edwin.]—Fun.

LATEST FROM RAMSGATE.—The sea-serpent has visited the shores of Thanet. He was observed by people engaged in reading the papers on the pier. He made his appearance during a shower of frogs, and dived out of sight on being pelted with enormous gooseberries.—Fun.

A READY ANSWER.—A few months ago a famous Prussian general was inspecting some military stables. "What do I see there?" he said, in tones of thunder, to a sergeant, "cobwebs?" "Yes, sir," was the respectful reply; "we keep them to catch flies and prevent their troubling the horses."

FANNY IN THE KITCHEN.—Great consternation prevails amongst the female domestic servants of the respectable classes in the metropolis. This is the dull season of the year, and alarming reports are about that the bakers are likely to discontinue this call.—Punch.

"DUCUS A NON," ETC.

Visitor: "How long has your master been away?"

Irish Footman: "Well, sorr, if he'd come home yesterday he'd be gone a week to-morrow; but or he doesn't return the day after shure he'll a' been away a fortnight next Thursday!"—Punch.

VERY KNOWING.

Smart Youth to Boatman: "What a very high tide it was last night, boatman?"

Boatman: "Yes, sir! Spring-tide, sir!"

St. K.: "Oh, ah! Come, that won't do with me, you know. You can't have a spring tide in the autumn!"—Fun.

NEEDING AND BEING.

(SOUND: An expensive watering-place.) Boating Swell languidly: "Dawson! Oh! I saw, believe me yes? And yaa!—but I should never have, aw, expected to see you here!"

Smart little Mrs. Halfpenny, nestled at the inn: "No? Well, I'm glad, judging from your faith in your eyes, to hear you see!"—Fun.

GOOD BARRING.—Sheridan once told a story of the exquisite good breeding of a banker's clerk, of whom the wit had borrowed some money, and to whom he actually repaid it. "Didn't he look astonished?" asked a discourteous friend. "No," said Sheridan, "he was just going to look astonished when he remembered his manners, and swept away the money as unconcernedly as if he had not given up any idea of seeing it again."

THE COMING RACE.

Doctor Bonaparte: "By-the-by, Mr. Sawyer, are you engaged to-morrow afternoon? I have rather a ticklish operation to perform—an amputation, you know."

Mr. Sawyer: "I shall be very happy to do it for you."

Dr. Evangelina: "Oh, no, not that! But will you kindly come and administer the chloroform for me?"—Punch.

REMEMBER.

Lean Gormandiser: "Isay, Jack, do you recollect a certain saddle of four-year-old Welsh mutton we had at Tom Brisket's one Sunday afternoon about this time last year?"

Fat Ditto: "I should think I did!"

(Pause.)

Lean Gormandiser: "That was a saddle of mutton, Jack!"

Fat Ditto: "Ah! wasn't it?"

(Long pause.)

Lean Gormandiser: "I often wish I'd taken another slice of that saddle of mutton, Jack!"—Punch.

WOMAN'S OWN WORK.—A strong-minded lady has written an article in which she maintains that needlework is an occupation below the dignity of woman. What she thinks of needlework she would probably have thought of spinning in the old days when they that spun were living Jennies. She would have turned up her nose, of course, at the distaff and spindle. It is too probable, however, at least for men who might be blent if they chose, that the ladies who would scorn to do the work of looms will for

the most part themselves remain spinsters all their lives.—*Punch*.

WOMEN OF UNDERSTANDING.—A Dundee shoemaker writes to a local paper to say that the women of that town, of all grades, have about the largest feet in the United Kingdom. He has made boots up to 12½ inches. This is the place for fellows who admire women that are all sole. We confess the impression such feet make on us is calculated to "last."—*Fun*.

THERE'S LUCK IN ODD NUMBERS.

An American paper states that—

A marriage licence was issued to two persons in Indianapolis lately who had been married and divorced twice before.

Well; three is a lucky number, and this time these matrimonial experimentalists may meet with partners after their own hearts. We should think it would be rather a good notion for the Indianapolis to issue marriage, certificate and divorce decrees in the same manner as foreign bonds, with a number of coupons to be detached as required.—*Fun*.

A NOVEL TEST OF DRUNKENNESS.—At a meeting of the Islington guardians, the other day, it transpired that the master of the district workhouse has discovered an easy method of settling whether a person is drunk or sober, and now that the stringent regulations of the new Licensing Act are in force the fact is well worthy the attention of police inspectors and magistrates. The master's plan is to require any over-festive peasant to say "Truly rural," and if he cannot he pronounced him to be drunk. The guardians have sanctioned this test.

OMEN.

Knowing *Old Gent* (who has only given the "bare facts")—"Why, what's the distance, then, the second milestone just the other side of the cemetery, I know the road well!"

Cabby: "Oh, do you? But (solemnly) look! 'ere, mark my words! recollect you've been a riding to-day be'ind a single white 'orse with a short tail!"

Old Gent (startled): "What do you mean?—White horse?"

Cabby (prophetically): "Vy, the next time you travel this road, p'raps 'll be be'ind four long-tailed black 'uns at th' expense of yer re-side-ry legates!"—*Fun*.

WONDERS OF THE FRA-SIDE.

Especially in Lodgings.

A carving-knife that is not shaky in the handle, and which, on great persuasion, can be induced, to cut.

A silver fork, on which the previous metal is still extant, and which has its proper complement of prongs.

A chamber candlestick supplied with an extinguisher.

A ditto looking-glass, which, if not propped up with your hair-brush, never turns its back upon you when you go to shave.

A bath which does not leak, and a water-jug that is not very dangerous to lift.

A leg of mutton, upon which, after dining with your husband, you can find next morning enough left to be hashed.

A (very) grand piano, whereof the keys don't rattle like the bones of nigger minstrelsy, and whereof you can imagine, by a powerful flight of fancy, that the notes have in their infancy been overheard in tune.

A chiffonier that you can lock securely, and a tea-caddy that really seems to be without a leak.

A door-mat which is not provided with a hole to trip up all your visitors when they come to call.

A table-cloth or napkin without eleven holes in it.

A window that has not at the least one sashline broken, and that does not vibrate noisily with the very slightest breeze.

An easy-chair which gives you any ease when sitting in it, and wherein you may take your usual after-dinner nap without an apprehension of a visitor coming off.

A tea-pot out of which, with excessive care and patience, you can contrive to pour a cupful without dropping the lid into it.

A sitting-room wherein, to avoid smoke-suffocation, you need not keep both door and window open when you light the fire.

A chest of drawers that is complete in all its handles, and a vegetable-dish cover, provided with a knob.

A minute in the day unmolested by an organ-grinder.

A window-blind which you can manage to pull up, even to the very top, without a wrinkle, and then not find it come down with a rattle on your head.

A bed-room paper which you can contemplate without horror every morning when you wake, nor conceive how fraught with suffering it would be to you if lying ill.

A writing-maid who looks as if she sometimes used a nail-brush.

A ceiling of a chimney ornament which are neither of them cracked.

A pen with both nibs perfect, and a writing-table not too sticky to write at.

A sofa of all softer than a hard deal board, and which has not its springs fractured exactly at the only place whereon you want to sit.

A picture or engraving, hung up by way of ornament, which, with any candour you could call a work of art.

A pot which makes your coffee at all clearer than pea-soup.

A pair of decanters which are not an odd couple, and half a score of wine glasses, any two of which will match.

A door which does not let a hurricane of draught through it, and which you can actually shut without a slam.

And, finally, a bed that you may go to without trembling, and a bill that you may pay without a fear of being fleeced.—*Punch*.

SUMMER AND PARENTS.

Mr. Quondam sparkles once again,

My royal wreaths are curled,

My minnow music's sung by birds,

Or by the torrent's hurled;

My emerald mantle trailed for all,

My banner blue unfurled,

And I, in joy, am shedding joy

Around a peopled world.

The stately mountains give delight—

How gloriously they stand!

Their vast green coronas are there

From me at Heaven's command;

But in the gently rounded hills,

By loving soft winds fanned,

I have my crowning crestway,

Along the rosy land.

For they the mothers' bosoms there

So image mid blest hours,

The life streams from them flowing out,

And nursing Nature's powers,

While on their tops bloom lovingly

A paradise of flowers,

And there by Heaven remembered too,

In marriage-feeding showers.

How sweet to read their little lives!

In every one to see,

As in embrace of wedded notes,

The mated ministry.

The Hymeneal hours are here:

What lovely fruit will be

Of human love, for which all breathe

The fragrant prophecy:

The prophecy, through myriad years,

Fulfilled and so imparted

By children—there they laugh and dance

Beneath my roses curled.

Oh, fathers, mothers, your lives, theirs,

For which, by Heaven unfurled,

I came to hold my banner blisse

Above a peopled world! W. R. W.

GEMS.

A small sorrow distracts—a great one makes us collected; as a bell loses its clear tone when slightly cracked, and recovers it if the fissure is enlarged.

The sorrows of a noble mind are spring frosts, which precede the summer; those of a corrupt and enervated one are the autumn frosts, which are only followed by winter.

A man should never glory in that which is common to a beast, nor a wise man in that which is common to a foolish one, nor a good man in that which is common to a wicked man.

When you have lost money in the streets every one is ready to help you look for it; but when you have lost your character every one leaves you to recover it as you can.

In all cases of slander currency, whenever the forger of the falsehood is not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the endorsers.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GOLDEN INK.—Gold ink is prepared as follows: Grind upon a porphyry slab with a muller, gold leaf and fine white honey, till the former is reduced to an impalpable powder. The paste is then carefully collected and diffused through water, which dissolves the honey, causing the deposition of the precious metal. The water must now be decanted and the sediment evaporated to free it from the sac-

charine matter; the powder exsiccated is very brilliant, and when required for use is suspended in macilage of gum arabic. After the writing executed with this ink is dry it should be varnished with Ivory. Silver ink is made in the same manner by substituting this metal in leaf for gold.

STATISTICS.

THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE TEA TRADE.—One of the most interesting facts which appear in the Board of Trade Returns for July is the unusual quantity of the tea imports. In 1870, in the corresponding month, we imported only 711,000 lb.; in the corresponding month of 1871, 4,010,000 lb.; but this year, in July, the import has been 32,912,000 lb.—the increase in value being from 56,996l. in 1870, to 315,008l. in July, 1871, and 1,704,000l. in July, 1872. The explanation, we understand, is the great increase in the number of tea steamers coming through the Suez Canal, a which bring the new season's teas much earlier than was formerly the case.

INCOME-TAX OF TOWNS.—In the financial year ending the 5th of April, 1871, the income assessed to income-tax under Schedule D (profits of trades, professions, etc.) amounted to 28,077,865l. in London, i.e., in "the city," 10,283,742l. in the borough of Marylebone, 7,167,635l. in Westminster, Finsbury 4,463,860l. Southwark 2,706,443l. Hackney 2,261,722l. Tower Hamlets 2,219,191l. Lambeth 1,904,200l. Chelsea 1,057,672l. Greenwich 831,262l.; making a total of above 60 millions sterling for the metropolitan district, or nearly three-eighths of the whole 145 millions assessed to income-tax under Schedule D in the Parliamentary boroughs of the United Kingdom. There are 15 other towns in which the income assessed under that schedule exceeded a million sterling. In Liverpool it amounted to 8,512,363l. in Manchester it was 8,231,203l. in Glasgow 6,628,494l. Birmingham 5,017,046l. Edinburgh 4,389,623l. Dublin 2,749,329l. York 2,628,424l. Leeds 2,318,561l. Dewby 2,309,940l. Bristol 2,044,272l. Sheffield 1,509,984l. Bradford 1,566,899l. Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1,394,377l. Belfast 1,338,141l. Hull 1,240,625l. It must be borne in mind that railways, mines, canals, etc., which are, in fact, trading concerns, are classed in Schedule D. Probably their profits very greatly swell the return for the town in which the head office is situated.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY has consecrated St. Peter's Church, The Grove, Portland; the edifice was entirely built by convicts, and will accommodate 522 persons.

MR. DISRAELI'S WALKING-STICK.—Mr. Levi Thompson, a mechanic, of Congleton, has presented Mr. Disraeli with a fine walking-stick which he cut out of a holly plant. Mr. Disraeli thanked the donor in a kindly letter, and promised him that the comely staff would be his constant companion.

SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH.—The "Great Eastern" steamship, lying in the Medway, a short distance above Sheerness, is now taking on board some of the new electric cable, which a French company intend to lay from the Land's End to Halifax. About 30 miles of cable per day is received on board, and are fully coiled in one of the vast tanks. The "Great Eastern" will not leave her present moorings to deposit the cable till next summer.

A MONSTER ANVIL BLOCK.—Preparations are being made in the Dial Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, for a casting which is understood will be the largest ever attempted in that establishment. It is intended for the anvil block of the 30-ton Nanyth hammer about to be erected in the new workshop of the Royal Gun Factories. It will weigh more than a hundred tons, and will be a smooth, iron casting, the large slabs of metal to form the bed of the anvil having been cast in sand.

FIFTY-THREE HOURS IN AN OPEN BOAT WITHOUT FOOD.—The other day the Danish barque Margaretha arrived in the Tyne, from Gottenburg, having on board a man named Giffard Johnson, belonging to North Shields, who had been found in a boat at sea, 30 miles north-east of Tyne-mouth Castle. Johnson left the Tyne for the purpose of fishing, and after he had been at sea a short time the weather became stormy, with a rolling sea. He lost some of his oars, and also had his sail blown away. He drifted out to sea, but was eventually picked up by the Margaretha. The poor fellow had had nothing to eat or drink from the time he left the Tyne until he was picked up, having been 53 hours without food or water, and he was greatly exhausted. He states that one ship passed him, and refused to throw him a rope.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
ELIOTA; OR, THE	GENS 537
GYPSY'S CURSE ... 505	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 537
SCIENCE 508	STATISTICS 537
NOVEL BLOWING AT	MISCELLANEOUS ... 537
PARATUS 508	
TRY HIM ONCE MORE	
HISTORIC LACE ... 508	
A BUTTERFLY INVA-	
SION 508	
MARGOLD 509	
LORD DAN'S ERROR	
ROBERT RUSHTON'S	
DESTINY 513	
WINIFRED'S DIA-	
MONDS 517	
WARNED BY THE PLA-	
NETS 518	
FIGHTING WITH FATE	
GROWTH OF NAILS ... 523	
HOW SHE SAVED HIM	
FACTS 523	
SUMMER AND PARENTS	
327	

Page	Page
GENS 537	
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 537	
STATISTICS 537	
MISCELLANEOUS ... 537	
LORD DAN'S ERROR,	
commenced in ... 476	
MARGOLD, commenced	
in 478	
WARNED BY THE PLA-	
NETS, commenced in	
... .. 480	
FIGHTING WITH FATE,	
commenced in ... 490	
ROBERT RUSHTON'S	
DESTINY, commenced	
in 485	
ELIOTA, OR, THE	
GYPSY'S CURSE, com-	
menced in ... 486	
WINIFRED'S DIAMONDS,	
commenced in ... 487	

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BESSIE O.—The handwriting is a carelessly disguised production.

BLURBELL.—For the present we must be allowed to decline the proffered manuscript.

H.—We are afraid we cannot do anything for you in the matter about which you have written.

ARNOLD C. A.—The lines are not good. The other part of the letter is so carelessly written that it cannot receive farther attention.

H. M. H.—The careful application of the juice of green walnut peels very much diluted with water will probably have the desired effect.

J. C. C.—We will endeavour to read what you have sent in due course, but we should add that we are somewhat overworked with applications of a similar description.

PORTSMOUTH.—To fill the described position a man must be perfect in every branch of the art, and be appointed to the post by the colonel of the regiment. Enlistment is also necessary.

B. S. and J. C.—It would seem that the distance of the place at which you are stationed, from the locality whence the young women hail, will place insuperable difficulties in the way of farther acquaintance.

THOMAS A. (Manchester).—All the back numbers of the LONDON READER may be obtained at the published price. State the particulars to a news-agent in your city and he will procure what you require through the London house with which he deals.

A CONSTANT READER.—The hair on your face cannot be permanently removed, except by a process which will injure the skin and cause a much greater disfigurement to your appearance than does the natural peculiarity you are anxious to be rid of.

R. S.—Your communications always interest us, and the perusal of them often affords us pleasure; so pray write to us as often as you feel inclined. We think the piece "Let us Chant" might do upon a pinch. The printer would correct some obvious orthographical slips of your pen.

J. W. S. (Malvern).—It is not improbable that your former letters have miscarried, for we have only seen the letter from you in which you were very angry with somebody. We are sorry we cannot help you, and we cannot for the simple reason that we know nothing at all about the matter.

AGUSTA T.—It appears to us that we are unable to offer any serviceable suggestion concerning the difficult task you have in hand, the full particulars of which as detailed by you we have carefully read. Probably it may be safely left where it is without any attempt on our part to interfere.

To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to gaze on."

MAC M.—The increase of weddings in the first quarter of the present year is considerably in excess of the numbers returned in any winter quarter since 1863, and it is as much as 8,630 more than in the corresponding quarter of 1871. These figures coupled with those pointing to the decrease of pauperism are relied upon as evidence of the improving condition of the British population.

LOUISE.—The search you have made cannot have been a thorough one, for the lines you allude to were written by Sir Walter Scott. They commence with the seventeenth line of the 18th stanza of the 5th Canto of "The Lord of the Isles," and correctly copied read as follows:

"Oh! mark a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the richer little meant!
And many a word at random spoken
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!"

E. K.—The Foundling Hospital is situated in Guildford Street, Brunswick Square, London. An application from a woman who is simply *enroute* will not be entertained. She must wait until the child is born. For her application for the admission of her infant to have a chance of success she must prove to the satisfaction of the Governors that it is her first child, and that she is poor and respectable. Particulars as to the modes upon which the Governors meet and as to the modes of proceeding generally can be obtained by a personal application to the porter at the lodge at the entrance to the institution.

S. C. W.—The sonnet might perhaps be said to be fairly written if the appeal to Hope were made in accordance with the ordinary ideas held concerning that quality of the soul. We are familiar with the inspiring and energizing functions of Hope, but we never before heard of its direct soothing influence. If Hope is at all to be invoked in such a condition as the writer of the sonnet places himself, surely it would be in reference to

the fitness for and time of reunion with the departed and not as a direct agent whereby the sense of bereavement is to be dispelled. We can only deal with the other matters referred to in your note as they come before us.

CONSTANCE H.—In many matters of etiquette the will of the lady is supreme and enables her with propriety to act in accordance with her own wishes. For our part we can see nothing objectionable in a lady shaking hands with a gentleman whom she had frequently met in a house of business, although she had never been introduced to him. The volition must come from the lady's side; she must make the advance. In such a case a gentleman would be careful not to presume either upon the lady's courtesy or cordiality, on the other hand he would be neither silent nor morose. The colour of the hair appears to be a very dark brown.

BESSIE B.—Lemonade that does not effervesce is often made by the addition of a little Wenham Lake ice and pure water to a wineglassful of lemon syrup previously prepared. The following is a recipe for making such a syrup: To two pounds of loaf or crushed white sugar put two pints of water and the juice of eight good lemons, with the thinly pared rind of three. First boil the sugar and water, skimming till clear. Then add the lemon peel and unstrained juice, boiling ten minutes longer. When the syrup is done, strain while hot; then bottle. This quantity will fill two small claret bottles. By making this syrup in the spring, when lemons are plentiful and cheap, you may have lemonade whenever you wish it at a comparatively small cost. It will keep indefinitely.

A. B. C.—An incorrigible boy of eleven may possibly be dealt with under the 22 and 30 Vict., c. 115. The method of proceeding is for the parent to take the child before two justices at petty sessions. The parent, after stating the facts relevant to the lad's incorrigibility, must express a desire that the boy may be sent to an industrial school, the parent undertaking to pay for his maintenance while there. The justices may then order the child to be sent to any industrial school the managers of which shall be willing to receive him; but the child cannot be detained in the school against his own consent after the age of fifteen. The Act above referred to should be read in connection with the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Act passed in the last session of Parliament.

VERSE AND PROSE.

"See! the birds are here. " Ah! the birds have gone."

One cry o'er another slips,
Till adown in the tangled beaten grass
The foot of the summer trips.

All the rosy wreaths of the May buds lie
Under brown September sheaves,
While above the top of the empty nest
Anon her kerchief weaves.

"The birds have come." Did they ever sing,
Little Ruth, so sweet before?
Listen long and well, for the song to-day
Is a song without encore.

The birds will come with another spring,
And the May bush blossoms show;
But the sweetest song they can sing but once,
But once can the same rose blow.

"Ah! the birds have gone." Nay, the maid
betrotted
Cares not for the empty nest;

For the sunny time, touching now and then,
Holds within a lover's guest.

So they faintly call from the August edge
Of summer to say, Good-bye;

But she never misses the singing band
That fades in the Southern sky;
For the happy time that was strangely short
Twixt coming and going wings,
Had its own fair idyl rhymed and set,
And this little Ruthie sings.

"See! the birds are here. " "Lo! the birds have gone."

Ah! in all your lifetime, dear,
They will never sing, never once again,
As they sang, little Ruth, this year. E. L.

LOVELY LILKIE, nineteen, tall, fair, fond of home, cheerful, and would make a loving wife. Respondent must be industrious and kind-hearted.

BROO O, twenty-four, medium height, fair, would like to marry a dark young man, about her own age and height.

JAMES G., twenty-two, tall, dark, and considered handsome. Respondent must not be under his own age and pretty; a milliner preferred.

FRED T., twenty-one, rather short, stout, and in the Navy. Respondent must be about his own age, and have no objection to go abroad.

JANE, nineteen, rather short, considered pretty, and domesticated. Would like to marry a tall young man, not over twenty-five.

C. T., twenty-seven, 5ft. 9in., dark hair and eyes, and is a tradesman. Respondent must be about his own age, and able to cook well.

BELLA, twenty-three, tall, rather stout, brown eyes, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must not be under twenty-four, dark, handsome, fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

EDITH, twenty, medium height, dark-brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, accomplished, domesticated and loving. Respondent must be a gentleman in a good position as "Edith" has a little money.

AMY, twenty-three, blue eyes, light-brown hair, pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, tall, handsome, of a loving disposition, and have a little business of his own.

JENNY, twenty-two, medium height, light-brown hair, well educated, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, with dark complexion, and about her own age; a tradesman preferred.

ERMINIE, eighteen, fair, blue eyes, white teeth, light

hair, good looking; would make a good-tempered wife. Respondent must be fair, about twenty-one years of age, with a good income.

JOHN S., twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., dark-brown eyes, fair complexion, loving, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, dark, good figure, and well educated.

BRITANNICUS, twenty-two, tall, rather stout, light moustache, and able to keep a wife. Respondent must be a servant about nineteen, thoroughly domesticated and a good singer.

CLARE, twenty, medium height, fair complexion and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, handsome, loving, fond of music, and able to keep a wife.

MARIE D., nineteen, tall, rather pretty, and a good needlewoman. Respondent should be a young Suffolk farmer, tall, dark, handsome, well educated, and have a good disposition.

TEDDY H. would like to marry a little brunette who is not over twenty-five, tall, and accomplished; he is twenty-six, tall, fair complexion, in a good situation, and fond of home and children.

NATTIE, twenty, medium height, light-brown hair, blue eyes, a brunette, good pianiste, and loving. Respondent must not be over twenty-three, handsome, and in a little business of his own.

POLLIE R., twenty-one, medium height, blue eyes, fair complexion, rather stout, a domestic servant with a loving heart. Wishes to marry a tall, dark young man, good looking, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

SWEET PEA, eighteen, medium height, light complexion, brown hair and eyes, rather pretty. Wishes to marry a young gentleman of dark complexion, rather tall, comfortably situated, and handsome.

BESSIE, a domestic servant, twenty-five, medium height, fair complexion, and not bad looking; would like to meet with a respectable mechanic who would make her a good husband. She has been very respectably brought up.

HECTOR, twenty-seven, 5ft. 7in., handsome, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, a tradesman, would make a loving husband to any young lady who is fair, lively, and cheerful. She must be a good pianiste, able to dance and make a pudding.

PHILIP, twenty-seven, medium height, dark hair, brown eyes, in a good situation, fond of music, and good looking. Respondent must be pretty, fond of home and children, and domesticated; the daughter of an engineer preferred.

CLAUDINE, nineteen, medium height, dark with large hazel eyes, clear complexion, rosy cheeks, very fond of pleasure, would make a loving wife. Respondent to be rather tall, dark, handsome, with sufficient income, good tempered, and fond of music.

CLAUDIA, eighteen, tall, rather fair, dark hair, brown eyes, loving, well educated and good tempered. Respondent must be in the Army, about twenty-five, handsome, steady, and good tempered; a native of Shropshire preferred.

Bos would like to marry a young lady who is between twenty and thirty, who is tall, fair, loving, domesticated, and possesses a little money; he is thirty-one, rather tall, fair, in a good position, and could keep a wife very comfortably.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

A LOVER OF SAILORS is responded to by—"Jewel Block," twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., fair complexion, fond of children, and a temperate man.

GEORGE by—"Solis," fair, rather short, and wants some one to love.

CHARLES by—"Emily Alice," nineteen, medium height, brown hair, and very loving.

BILL S. by—"W. P.," brown eyes and hair, fond of home, a good cook; would make a loving wife.

ALMA by—"W. W.," twenty-one, fond of home and children.

CAROLINE by—"G. B.," twenty-six, 5ft. 6in., light hair, blue eyes, seaman in the Navy.

JOHN S. by—"M. T.," twenty-one, tall, brown curly hair, gray eyes, and fond of the sea.

JAMES by—"Pollie," seventeen, medium height, fair, light-brown hair; she thinks "James" would suit her very well.

LOTTIE by—"Arthur S. H.," twenty-three, tall, dark, very handsome, in a good position, and presumptive heir to an estate.

EDWARD by—"Lizzie," nineteen, 5ft. 4in., fair complexion, blue eyes, light-brown hair, and does not object to leave England.

A. J. P. by—"Violet," eighteen, fair, pretty, a good figure, and would make a home happy.

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NOTICE.—The price of THE LONDON READER to the Trade is 1s. 5d. per quire of twenty-six copies.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by G. A. SMITH.